DADDY'S BEST FRIEND EROTCA SHORT STORY
Virgin
TAKEN in CAVE
OLDER MAN YOUNGER WOMAN AGE-GAP HIGH STEAM SMUTT BOOK
IZZIE VEE & DOLLIANA JEFFRIES

Daddy's Best Friend Erotca Short Story: VIRGIN TAKEN IN CAVE

Older Man Younger Woman Age-Gap High Steam Smutt Book

IZZIE VEE & DOLLIANA JEFFRIES

Steamy, Forced & Forbidden Romance

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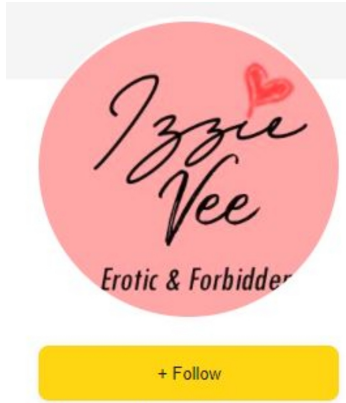

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Chapter 1

Amanda

This wasn't what I had in mind when I graduated college. I guess I thought I'd be having more fun, meeting new people—a man even.

This felt like I was still a youngster, only I wasn't living under my parent's roof anymore. But since I still couldn't get a job after a month of graduating, they still paid my bills and basically made sure I didn't starve to death.

I got up out of bed with a sigh and dragged my feet to the bathroom. I looked in the mirror, taking note of my bedhead, the sleep lines marked across my face, and my big blue eyes. Too big for my liking.

Making a face, I turned on the shower and allowed the water to run while I headed back to the bedroom to check my phone. Of course, the only person who texted me often was my mom, who reminded me we had a girl's day out today. I smiled, shrugging my shoulder before I decided to head back and take a shower.

**

I jumped in the Aston Martin I'd received a month ago as a gift from my grandparents for graduating college. In no time, I was at the restaurant where my mom had agreed to meet. It was our favorite place to eat during the day and had the best food in the city.

I walked inside, smiling at some of the staff I recognized. My gaze quickly scanned the inside before I saw my mom waving me over at the far end, a smile on her face.

I smiled and quickly made my way over, hugging her as she stood to greet me.

"Hey, Mom," I said before I took a seat.

"How are you, sweetheart?"

I sighed. "I'm fine, thanks to you guys."

"Oh, honey stop it! You know we're capable of taking care of you even if you never work a day in your life. Don't you forget that was an option," she said, raising a brow at me.

“I know. I just…”

“Give it some more time. It’s only been a month. You’ll find a job soon, and if you took up your dad’s offer to help you out, you would already.”

I pulled in a breath. “I know. Mom. I just … I want to do things on my own, even if it’s a struggle.”

She smiled, “You take that kind of independence from your dad.”

I grinned at that. My mom was the perfect trophy wife who got all she wanted without having to lift a finger. However, after getting bored with sitting at home every day, she finally decided to become an interior decorator. Of course, with her natural talent and her links to my father, she’d quickly flourished in that field.

“It’s probably a good thing, by the way. We’ll be heading to Tahiti in a few weeks for our vow renewal. Getting a job now would only complicate things.”

I rubbed my forehead. “I guess you’re right.”

She reached across and held my hand. “You’ll be fine, honey. Trust me.”

As my lips parted to reply, a waitress came to take our order. We both ordered shrimp tempura rolls, our favorite thing to have together—probably the only thing we even had in common—and the blue eyes.

Mom was a blue-eyed blonde who could definitely walk a runway at forty-five and kill it. She attracted attention everywhere she went, not only because she was beautiful and vogue-worthy but also her personality was infectious—sometimes overwhelming even. She just always seemed happy, and I was quite the Wednesday Adams in comparison.

She was slender, and I had wide hips, larger breasts, and a rounder face. Sometimes, I wondered how I’d turned out so drastically different from everyone else.

I straightened in my seat. “I still can’t believe you and dad are renewing your vows.”

She grinned, a straight line of white teeth gleaming at me. “Right! I’m so excited. I can’t wait to be in Tahiti—I’ve never been before, but the place is gorgeous.”

“It is. The reviews are great, too,” I inserted.

“The venue for the wedding is so breathtaking. I don’t want to give you too many details, but I know you’ll be pleasantly surprised.

It's everything."

"I'm happy for you guys. I hope someday I'll find something like what you and Dad have. That man is obsessed with you," I laughed.

She chuckled. "The feeling's mutual, but oh, honey, you'll definitely find it. I didn't even believe such things existed until I met your father. When the right person comes along, you'll know. And you're so smart and beautiful, sweetheart, come on!"

I grinned. My mom was always my biggest cheerleader. Always.

"Thanks, Mom," I said before clearing my throat before I got too emotional. "What's the guest list like by the way?"

"Well, Paul and I agreed to keep it small and intimate. His parents, my mom, and this friend of his he always visits in Washington. He's agreed to sponsor half of this trip—which was shocking to me, but he's a big shot neurosurgeon in DC."

My brows raised. "WOW, how comes I've never heard of him."

"I didn't think you'd be interested in work talk. Before now, it was even boring to me, but him funding most of this wedding was quite the eye-opener."

"If he's funding half the wedding, it means they're really great friends then. Have you ever met this guy?"

"Once. He came here on business a few months ago. He's a great guy. He's friendly and is a bit younger than Paul. He comes from a wealthy family as well."

"Oh, Dad doesn't have many friends he actually likes. I'm curious to see what this guy's like."

"Well, I can see why they're friends. They share similar views. If you were around these past months, you should have heard how he talks about this guy. I was starting to get a little jealous," she laughed.

I scoffed. "It's that serious?"

"Oh, it's not. I've just never seen your father so…" her brows furrowed as she searched for her words. "I don't know, but it's good to see. This guy's actually younger, but it's almost like Paul looks up to him."

My brow shot up. "Wow."

"Yes, but you'll be able to form your own opinion of him once you meet."

I nodded. "What's his name?"

"Carter… um Carter Johnson."

Chapter 2

Amanda

The weeks went by quickly, and in no time, I was boarding my family's private jet to Tahiti for my parents' vow renewal. My grandparents were there, too, along with my parents, and since everyone was present, it made me think of Dad's friend.

"Hey, Dad what about your friend?"

"Oh, he'll be meeting us there. He's flying from DC."

"Okay," I said before I leaned back in the chair, watching as the jet took off. Grandma Ester—Mom's Mom—was beside me, reading a novel that she couldn't seem to take her eyes off. My other grandparents on my dad's side were towards the front, having a conversation I couldn't hear from where I was seated. I was just happy the topic wasn't about me and my life this time.

Mom and Dad were all cuddled up in the back. Mom was laughing after something Dad said, and they looked lovelier than ever.

I sighed to myself, somehow feeling lonely, even though I was surrounded by my closest family members. It just felt like there was something missing in my life, and I didn't even know what it was.

I plugged my earphones into my ears and closed my eyes after putting on my favorite playlists, which had songs that made me feel even more pitiful about myself.

I must have dozed off because a gentle tap against my hand had my eyes fluttering open. I glanced over at Grandma, who had a concerned look on her face and quickly switched off the music, glancing at the time. We were two hours into our flight, which meant we had about six more hours to go.

"Is everything okay, honey?" She asked, her green eyes searching my face.

I smiled. "I'm fine, Grandma," I reassured.

I glanced at the small table in front of us and realized she was done with her book, which meant she probably wanted to talk.

"Have you ever been before?"

It took me a second to realize she was referring to Tahiti. "Er, no… first time."

"Me too. I've always gone to the Caribbean but never this place.

I heard it's nice, though."

"It is. I've seen the pictures."

She nodded her head. "I thought you'd bring along a friend or something. You'll only be around a bunch of old people." She chuckled, and I did, too.

"I don't have many friends. I uh… I had a handful in college, but I haven't heard much from them since we graduated. I expected it though," I shrugged.

"What about a boyfriend?" She asked.

I cleared my throat. "None."

"You're such a beautiful girl, Amanda. What's stopping you?"

I rubbed my arm. "I don't know. I guess I just haven't met anyone I'm interested in… and I don't want to waste my time with people who aren't serious."

Her eyes crinkled with a smile. "Well, you still have a lot of time to find someone who is just the perfect match for you."

My cheeks warmed. "I think so, too."

She pulled in a breath. "You know, after your grandfather died, I knew that'd be it for me. I knew I could never find someone like him again. I guess everyone meets their person at one point in their life. You'll have that, too."

I smiled. "Mom said the same."

She nodded. "It's true, and I've seen your mother find hers. I can't wait for you to do the same."

"Me too, thanks, Grandma," I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

She reached across to gently pat me on the leg. I smiled, thinking about what we had just talked about. Seeing I'd never had a boyfriend in my entire life, it was hard for me to see myself finding the love of my life anytime soon. Some people find their person early in life and some later. I had a feeling I was one of those people who'd find mine at the brink of my death, like some of those tragic romance novels.

Everyone in this room except me was lucky enough to have found it. Maybe it'd skip a generation?

I reclined my seat and decided to sleep for the rest of the journey.

**

The island was the most breathtaking place I'd been to and as someone who'd been traveling with their parents since I was a year old, that said a lot. Even as we drove to our resort, we were surrounded by greenery and tall mountains that stood in the background like ancient sentinels guarding the island.

Though it was slightly humid, the air was fresh, and the smell of the rich vegetation added to the purity of the island. I knew my family agreed because as they looked through the windows, the vehicle was filled with oohs and ahhhs as they took in the captivating views.

The ride from the airport was about twenty minutes long, but it seemed less because there were so many things to grab your attention. So much to see and be in awe of.

Once we arrived at the resort, we were immediately greeted with flower leis from friendly staff who added to the overall tropical feeling with their floral dresses and garlands wrapped around their long, bone-straight hair.

"Thank you," I said as I fiddled with the petals around my neck. I glanced at Mom, who laughed in excitement, her happiness infectious as she said her thanks and made her way to the front.

Once we arrived in the lobby area, it seemed as if time had ceased when I looked through the windows at the stunning view ahead: the mountains, the body of glistening turquoise waters lit by the beaming sun.

"Wow," I muttered to myself.

But then my gaze shifted when a man rounded a corner and walked towards me. As beautiful as the view in front of me, this man gave it a run for its money. My pulse picked up pace as I stared at him unabashedly, taking in every striking detail of him. He was tall, had jet black hair and an arrow-straight nose, and as he smiled, I noticed the small cleft in his chin, covered by a low stubble. He wore one of those floral shirts, a few buttons opened, exposing his slightly hairy chest that was toned and glistening with sweat—or was it water?

I swallowed as I continued to stare at him, wondering why he was smiling like that or why it looked like he was coming right at me. The closer he came, the more my heart beat faster, and I just didn't know what was happening to me. Despite standing so still, I felt breathless. The noise around me faded into a distant hum, and my heart skipped a beat, an inexplicable connection pulling at my soul.

But then he moved past me, and reality came crashing into me like the jarring sound of a scratched record.

"Carter!" My dad announced, and I stiffened.

Who was Carter? Where was he?

I quickly turned to see the handsome man hugging Dad as they laughed together.

That was Carter?

"No way," I whispered as I stared at the interaction, somehow unable to believe it was true.

"You remember Camille," Dad said as he turned to my mom, who was smiling hard.

I watched as he got introduced to everyone. When everyone turned to look at me, my heart skipped a beat, especially seeing Carter's grey eyes studying me.

"This is our daughter, Amanda."

He raised a brow at that before he stepped towards me. "Ah, nice to finally meet you. Your dad brags about you every chance he gets," he said, and they chuckled.

I smiled, trying to suffocate the nervousness in my stomach. I glanced down at his outstretched hand, which was like twice the size of my own. Reluctantly, I placed mine in his and felt as if something ran through my body as soon as I touched him.

"It's nice to finally meet you, too," I said before he withdrew his hand. I knew my cheeks were probably red, and I didn't want to make it obvious I was blushing after this guy.

He was certainly not what I was expecting. Sure, my mom had said he wasn't forty yet, but I didn't expect him to look this young or fit.

They chatted for a while as they booked us into the resort. Once everything was done, and they took our luggage, it was time to get settled.

"We could meet back here in about an hour for lunch," Dad said as he looked between my grandparents and me.

Mom approached me. "Are you okay, sweetheart? You look a bit flustered."

I cleared my throat. "I think it's the heat, but I'm fine."

"Good. This place is beautiful, isn't it?"

"An understatement."

She grinned. "I knew you'd love it."

Just then, someone came and led us to our rooms. Mom and Dad had booked the overwater bungalows, which were quite limited

by the looks of it, but they were beautiful and had an incredible view of the mountainous vegetation and glistening ocean view.

Everyone was in the same vicinity, and I was happy for that. Though I had my own bungalow, they were small and intimate with a modern, tropical twist. They offered a private jacuzzi and a swim-up area attached, which gave a really stunning view of everything.

I pulled in a breath and once my luggage was placed inside, I tipped the bellhop. I closed the door and decided to take a much-needed shower. Once done, I got dressed in a sundress and left to meet the others.

I'd expected everyone to be there once I arrived, but to my surprise, no one was in sight. My gaze scanned the restaurant before I spotted Carter at the far end. My heart galloped, and I was about to head back to my room in panic when he turned in my direction and waved.

I managed a smile and sent him a small wave before I decided it might've been the polite thing to greet him. After all, we'd all be having lunch together.

I smoothed my dress with my hands and walked in his direction, noticing the way he didn't even take his eyes off me as I walked towards him. Heat pooled in the pit of my stomach, watching him watch me like that.

As I neared the table, he got up and pulled out a chair for me right beside him.

Who told him I wanted to sit beside him?

"Thank you," I said regardless, taking a seat right beside him. His cologne was the first thing that greeted me. It was a captivating mix of woody and earthy notes with hints of citrus. The scent was warm and sophisticated, filled with mystery and allure.

"Your dad told me you graduated last month," he said, his voice thick.

"I did," I said.

"You must be happy."

I shrugged. "Er– in a sense. I'm happy not doing course work, but the real world kinda sucks," I trailed off with a shaky laugh.

"I felt the same after I graduated. It gets better, though. You just have to find that thing you love."

"Have you always wanted to be a doctor?" I asked.

"Not always, but it's kind of a family thing. I'm from a long line

of doctors—looking back, I didn't think I even had a choice," he smiled.

"Hmm, I am, too, but I decided to break tradition and do an Art Major instead," I scoffed.

"Ahh, how's that working out for you?"

I pulled in a breath. "It's not. I'm sure my dad would laugh in my face if he could." I scratched my head. "He uh, he wanted me to be just like him and after not getting a son, I realize how much of a disappointment I might be to him."

I didn't even know why I was telling him of all people about my life, but it felt natural—like I could.

"Trust me, your dad's proud. It's true when I said he brags about you all the time."

I smiled and lowered to the table. Maybe it was time for me to stop talking and embarrassing myself. I was happy when my family entered the restaurant.

"Oh, honey you're already here," my mom said as she took a seat.

"Yeah, I thought you guys were already here when I came," I said.

"Oh, I just had to take advantage of that jacuzzi. It was amazing," she said. Grandma came and sat on the opposite side of me, smiling as she reached for the menu, propping her glasses up on her nose.

"I'm starving," she said to me, still scanning the menu.

"Me, too," I admitted, taking a menu to do the same.

We ordered, and I was surprised at how quickly we were served. I'd opted for their national dish, which was raw tuna marinated in coconut milk and lime juice. Being a sushi lover, I didn't mind it one bit and thought it tasted great. I glanced at Carter and realized he had ordered the same thing. I smiled.

"So, Carter, is this your first time being in Tahiti?" Grandma Cecile asked as she sipped on her wine.

"Second time, ma'am."

"After I told Carter I was planning on renewing my vows, he suggested this place. I brought the idea to Camille, and she immediately agreed once she saw the pictures," Dad explained.

"Oh, that's lovely. The place is indeed beautiful," Grandma agreed.

Carter nodded, a smile on his face.

"Any wife of your own, dear—children?" She asked again.

Carter cleared his throat and patted the napkin against his mouth. "Not yet."

"Carter's work takes up most of his time," Dad put in.

"A handsome man such as yourself should be married with a wife to take care of you," she insisted.

"I'm sure I'll find someone when the time is right. In the meantime, I'm fully capable of taking care of myself," he chuckled.

She raised a brow before she got back to her meal. It didn't take her long to find another target, and as she looked up at me, I could tell it would be me.

"How about you, dear? How's the job hunting coming along?" She asked, putting her fork down to give me her full attention. I suddenly lost my appetite for my food.

"Er–"

"We agreed it would be best if she searched after this trip," Mom cut in, offering a tight smile.

"Well, I'd imagine she wouldn't have much searching to do if she'd stuck to medicine," she said, and my heart sank.

"Mom, please not this again," Dad intervened.

"What?" She exclaimed, looking shocked and confused. "All I'm saying is, medicine would've been a more secure career path for her. With this family's history, she would have been well-placed by now."

"Amanda is perfectly fine, Cecile," my mom pointed out, an edge to her voice.

Grandma Cecile raised her hands and her brows before she decided to continue with her meal. I sat there, feeling an intense urge to excuse myself and get some fresh air, but I didn't want to cause a scene, so I stayed. The awkward silence lingered at the table for longer than necessary, and I sat there, using my fork to play with my food, refusing to take my eyes off my plate.

The conversation that started after faded into a hum around me as I abandoned myself to my thoughts. Somehow, after being away at college for so long, I'd forgotten how uptight and snobbish my paternal grandparents were. Though, how could I forget when both of them were bred from generational wealth.

My mom had always complained that Dad was just like that when they'd started dating, but she'd managed to get him to loosen up

a bit. I knew my grandparents weren't pleased with my choice as soon as I announced what I'd be studying. They'd all tried to convince me to pursue something else—medicine—and if it weren't for my mom telling me I could be whatever I wanted, I would have listened.

But they were probably right. I'd always been passionate about art, but I didn't know how realistic it would be now that I graduated.

I sighed as I finally lifted my gaze from the table. The first person I glanced at was Carter. I almost gasped when I met his metallic gaze. As much as I wanted to look away, it was like there was something pulling me to him, and I realized looking away wasn't quite as easy.

My heart fluttered, heat rose to my face, and an unfamiliar tingling appeared between my legs. I swallowed the lump in my throat and tore my gaze away, even more desperate for air.

"Excuse me," I said, not awaiting a reply from anyone. I got up from my chair and briskly walked out of the restaurant.

I released a heavy sigh as soon as I was outside and closed my eyes when I felt the cool breeze against my skin. It was only then did I realize I'd been sweating.

"Shit," I muttered, feeling so flustered. I began walking on the beachside, my sandals now in my hand while the wind whipped my hair and dress. I smiled as I cast my gaze to the beautiful view around me. Everything was perfect.

I didn't know how long I walked for; I just knew that it did plenty to get my thoughts in order. I didn't know what I was feeling with Carter, and I didn't even want to find out. He was forbidden, and I knew that. He was much older than me, a family friend, and a guy like him just wouldn't give a girl like me the time of day.

I didn't know if it was the jet lag or the humidity, but I knew I wasn't thinking straight. Something had to explain my being attracted to my father's friend.

Chapter 3

Amanda

I took a nap that evening before deciding to join the others for dinner. I had no interest but didn't want a lecture from anyone. As I opened the door to my cabin, I met up with Mom, who looked like she was about to knock.

My brows furrowed. "Hey…"

"Hey, sweetheart," she said, rubbing my back as we walked along the pathway.

"Is everything okay?" I asked, seeing the expression on her face.

"Actually, that's what I wanted to find out from you," she said, flashing me a tight smile. "I know earlier at lunch was a bit tense."

"It's fine, Mom. It's not like I don't know what to expect from Grandma Cecile."

"Still, it was uncalled for, and I just wanted to make sure you're okay."

I nodded, offering her a small smile. "I am."

Her eyes remained on me. "You know not to take anything she says to heart, don't you?"

I swallowed. "I know I shouldn't, but I know she's right."

Mom gasped. "Come on, Amanda. In what way?"

I paused in my tracks to look at her. "Mom, everyone knows if I'd studied medicine instead, I would've had a job by now."

"Actually, you'd still be in school, but sweetheart, it's only been a few weeks," she pointed out.

"I know, but it'll take even longer."

She sighed. "Does it even matter if you do? We already told you; it doesn't matter if you work or not."

I sighed heavily. "It matters to me," I exclaimed before raking my fingers through my hair. "Anyway, I don't want to talk about that now. I just want to enjoy these five days—we only have four more to go."

Mom pulled in a breath. "Okay… well, we have a few things planned for tomorrow. There's a UTV tour I had scheduled for around 2pm, and then Paul and I have to meet with the manager to discuss

details about the wedding."

"A UTV tour?" I asked as we continued walking.

"Yeah, I thought it'd be fun. It looks fun on their website."

I laughed softly. "Okay, it sounds fun."

"Great," she said, pulling me in for a tight hug. I chuckled as I walked with her to the restaurant.

Carter was the first there, and as soon as I saw him, my heart fluttered. My mom's smile broadened as soon as she saw him.

"Carter," she announced before she opened her arms for a hug. They hugged while I stood there, watching the exchange. Once they were done, he turned to me, and my pulse increased, realizing he had his arms open for a hug as well.

It was the normal thing to do, right? He was a family friend, and there was obviously no harm in doing so. So, why was I feeling like I was about to partake in the biggest event of my life?

I offered a shaky smile and stepped into his arms with my pulse beating like drums. As soon as I pressed my body to his, fire fueled through my veins. He wore the same cologne—that sultry warmth that stirred my insides. He was warm, and I felt so small in his hands. My eyes closed against his chest, somehow struck by this trance I'd suddenly been placed in. I didn't want to let him go, and it was freaking odd, considering my mom was right there, and I was in public. But being in his arms felt right, perfect. It felt like this was where I'd needed to be all my life. The emotions that suddenly plagued me were like nothing I'd ever felt before, but I quickly remembered where I was and quickly pulled away.

My cheeks burned as I withdrew from his embrace and glanced at my mom, who seemed oblivious to what was happening. She'd already taken her seat and was scanning the menu.

I glanced at Carter and realized he had his eyes on me. The temperature rose in my body, and I just stood there staring back, finding it hard to believe that a man this much older had this effect on me. Earlier, I'd blamed my feelings on lack of sleep, but I was rested. Yet, my feelings seemed even more intensified.

I tore my gaze away from his ash-colored eyes and joined my mom, immediately reaching for the menu to distract myself.

Carter had just taken a seat when the others joined us. Throughout the meal, I tried my best not to look at him or even engage in conversation with anyone, as I'd realized I was an easy topic for conversation.

“So, Carter, how did you get into medicine?” Grandpa Paul asked as he sipped on his red wine.

It was probably the only time I looked up. “Uh– it’s tradition, I guess. My father and forefathers all studied medicine.”

Granddad’s thick, bushy brows perked up. “Oh, it’s the same with our family. We’re from a long line of doctors.”

“With the exception of Amanda, of course,” Cecile added.

I slumped my shoulders in defeat, reverting my gaze to my plate.

“Well, it’s never too late to study medicine. If Amanda were to ever have a change of heart in the future, she could still study. She’s still very young.”

I softly cleared my throat, looking up at him. “I’m sorry Grandpa, but I doubt that’ll be happening.”

A small silence fell at the table.

“Which is fine,” Mom added.

“I suppose it is, but that’s why I always encouraged you two to have more kids,” Cecile said.

Mom scoffed. “Why? So, the probability of one wanting to study medicine would be greater?” she quipped.

Dad sighed heavily. “Could we just…stop? We don’t care if our baby girl doesn’t glance at a scalpel for the rest of her life. Trust me, it’s not that serious.”

My throat constricted. Like earlier, I couldn’t sit through this one. Not again.

“Excuse me,” I said as I got up from my table and left.

I didn’t think it’d ever come to this, but all I wanted was to head back to the city and into my little apartment. At least there, I’d have peace.

Chapter 4

Amanda

The following morning, I slept in, doing my very best to avoid a disastrous breakfast centered around my life and my choices. The bungalow had a small patio area, which only gave you a view of the mountains ahead. I ate the breakfast I'd ordered and scrolled through my email, looking to see if I'd gotten an email from the places I'd applied.

I sighed and glanced at my phone, realizing it was almost midday, which reminded me of the tour we had in an hour.

I took a long soak in the tub while looking at the overcast skies, and afterwards, I got dressed in shorts and a T-shirt.

We assembled in the lobby area where Mom and Dad were waiting. Their faces lit up with smiles once they saw me, and I smiled back, scanning the small group of people for my grandparents.

"Hey, where are the others?" I asked.

"None was interested. Mom's excuse is being too old for such an adventure," Dad chuckled.

Well, thank God for small mercies.

"Carter will be here soon, though," he added.

My heart jumped as the words left my father's lips. "Carter's coming?"

"Yeah. He'll be riding with you. I hope you're okay with that," Dad said casually.

My lips parted as my body stiffened. "Uh, yeah why wouldn't I be?"

"Good." He rubbed the nape of his neck. "Listen, sweetheart, I'm sorry about last night. I know Mom can be overbearing sometimes."

Sometimes?

"I know, it's fine. I kinda know to expect anything with her."

He chuckled. "Good."

Just then, my eyes caught Carter moving towards us. I felt a tinge of deja-vu as he rounded a corner and moved in our direction, looking as beautiful as ever. He'd shaved down his beard, emphasizing

his strong jawline and the cleft in his chin. It also brought my attention to his peachy lips, which were wide and kissable.

I swallowed as my gaze lingered from his face to his broad shoulders. He was in one of those tropical print button-downs, a few buttons loose, exposing his chest, which held a chain with a silver pendant attached to the end.

“Sorry I’m late,” he said as he looked between us.

“Nah, you’re just on time,” Dad said, seemingly in a better mood.

The tour guide came and gave us instructions on the tour before everyone took their respective rides. Carter and I got into a side-by-side while Mom and Dad got in another. Despite the overcast sky and the sun struggling to peek through the clouds, I felt hot and knew it was because I was seated beside Carter.

“Are you okay?” He asked, and my head swiveled towards him, an instant smile on my face as I hastened to reassure him.

“Mhmm.”

“Ever ridden in one of these before?” He asked me as he lined up behind the others.

“Uh, once at a summer camp I went to as a teenager.”

He nodded, a smile on his face.

“You?” I asked.

“Quite a few times. I usually prefer ATVs, but this is good, too.”

I smiled. “You look like the adventurous type,” I said.

He chuckled. “Probably back in my college days. Now, not so much.”

“Work?”

He nodded. “Yeah, it keeps me busy most of the time.”

We started the journey, and the conversation died down as I stared at the trail and the beautiful views as we moved along. With my hair blowing in the wind and the fresh air against my skin, I felt completely free. I couldn’t keep the grin off my face the further we went, captivated by the high mountains, the rich vegetation, and the display of culture we saw as we passed through the town and headed up into the hills.

In the midst of it, my gaze shifted to Carter, who had his eyes planted on the road as he drove, but the smile on his face couldn’t be mistaken: his hair blowing in the wind, the glow of light on his skin.

He was a beautiful man and the only one who'd ever made me feel this way. But just my luck, right? The only man who I felt attracted to in my lifetime was the only one I couldn't have.

I sighed heavily and closed my eyes, enjoying the ride and the bit of sun that poked up from the sky, shining down on us.

We made a few stops when the tour guide spoke on the pineapple and banana fields we passed. We were briefed on the island's history and culture before we got to driving again. About an hour passed before everyone assembled at a point.

I was quick to get out to stretch my legs, but as soon as I stepped out, I was captivated by the heart-stopping view. We were on a point that overlooked the island that stretched out before us with its lush, green tropical foliage.

"Wow," I whispered, not thinking anyone would hear, but Carter was right beside me.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" He said. My eyes snapped to him, and our gazes caught, my heart doing backflips in my chest.

"Yeah. It really is."

His gaze lingered on me for a second longer before he went back to staring at the view.

Mom came towards me and pulled me into her, rubbing my shoulders. "This place is so heavenly," she said.

"Yeah, it's surreal."

She leaned her head against mine, and we looked at the view together for minutes before she glanced at the time.

"Oh, I hope we'll be leaving soon. I have the managers to meet with and finalize some things."

"Yeah, they'll probably be ready soon," I reassured. I chatted with Mom and Dad and Carter before the tour guide announced it was time to head back.

I was the first to get into our UTV. Carter came after and attempted to start up the vehicle, but nothing happened. I frowned, and we shared a look, the same bit of curiosity marred on his face.

"It's not starting?" I asked for certainty.

He tried again, but the engine didn't rumble to life. "Looks like something is wrong," he said before he stepped out and waved over the tour guide. That seemed to have caught the attention of the others because they paused, too, their gazes turning to us.

Mom and Dad got out of theirs, concern etched on both their

faces.

"What happened?" Mom asked.

"It's not starting," I provided while Carter and the guide went to the front to assess the engine. I exhaled a light sigh and shrugged at my parents, who looked panicked.

"Uh, seems to be engine issue," the tour guide said to Carter.

"Oh, that's horrible. What should they do now?" Mom shrieked.

The man scratched his head, seemingly flustered. "I could send someone to pick you up–"

"They can't stay here by themselves for another what—two hours," she exclaimed.

"Mom, it's fine," I was quick to reassure her once I realized she was getting a little carried away.

"Honey, why don't you go back with your mother? Carter and I will stay and wait for another ride."

"Dad, I'll be fine. I don't mind looking at this view for another hour or two, plus don't you guys have to finalize things on the wedding?" I asked.

He rubbed the nape of his neck.

"I'm really sorry," the guide chipped in.

Carter nodded. "It happens. We'll stay back; I'm sure we'll be fine," he said, glancing at me. I nodded.

Mom groaned. "Perhaps we should wait," she said.

"Mom…"

She slumped her shoulders. "Fine." She walked to her UTV, pulled out a small beach bag, and handed it to me.

"It's a few snacks and some sunscreen, though by the looks of it, it seems as if it's about to rain," she sighed. "In case you get hungry while you wait."

I smiled. "Thanks, Mom."

She pinched my cheeks before she went back to her van. I sighed as I watched them line up to head back. The tour guide apologized once again for the inconvenience and reassured us that help would be on the way soon enough. Dad was the type of person to file a complaint as soon as he got back, but I was fine. I didn't feel an ounce of panic. After all, I wasn't too eager to get back to my disapproving grandparents.

I turned to Carter once everyone was out of sight. He was

already staring at me, and my cheeks heated.

"I'm sorry you have to be stuck up here with me," I said, leaning against the railing.

His forehead wrinkled with a frown. "You say that as if it's a bad thing. I would rather be stuck here with you than anyone else."

"Not even my dad?"

He chuckled. "Not even. I know everything there is to know about your dad. I want to know more about you," he said, leaning against the iron rails.

My lips quirked into a small smile. "You want to know about me?" I asked, surprised that he did.

"Of course."

"Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you but you'll maybe fall asleep in the process."

He chuckled. "Come on, Amanda. I don't think you give yourself enough credit."

I shrugged, overlooking the island. "Just being honest."

"Tell me anyway. I think I'll be the judge."

I pulled in a breath. "If it isn't obvious by now, you must know that I decided to go against tradition and do something that's not normal for a Jeffries."

"You studied art instead of medicine," he said, and I nodded.

"My grandparents make it a habit to remind me every chance they get. My grandparents by my dad's side anyway. Grandma Ester, like my mom, doesn't really care about what I choose to do in life."

"And you still think your dad does?"

I looked at him then. "He says he doesn't, but I know deep down he does. He just doesn't want me to feel bad."

"I have to disagree with you on that part, Amanda."

I swallowed, looking down at my sneakers. "I've known him all my life. Trust me. You should see the way he looks sometimes when he introduces me to his friends and they ask, 'Oh you're a doctor too?' He's disappointed to say otherwise, but he has a pretty good way of hiding it."

I cleared my throat, turning to the island once again because I couldn't bear to look at Carter's empathetic face, but I wanted to get it off my chest. I'd never tell anyone how I felt before now.

"Sometimes, I wonder if my grandparents are right, y'know? If I

made a mistake by not pursuing medicine like everyone else in the family. I'm out of college now, and all of a sudden, the years seem like a waste."

My throat constricted, and I quickly swallowed to stop the emotions from choking me.

"I'm sure it's not."

I cleared my throat. "How can you even understand what I'm saying when you said it yourself; you're also from a long line of doctors."

There was a short silence, and I knew I had hit the nail on the head, but then he said,

"All throughout high school, all I wanted was to become a pro football player. I was pretty good at it, too, and at the end, was even offered a scholarship for college. I think it was then my parents realized it was more than just a hobby."

"My dad was furious when I expressed my dreams to him. Like you, I'm an only child, and he just wanted the tradition to go on and on, so he told me I couldn't do football anymore."

I met his gaze then. "Really?"

He nodded. "He threatened to strip me of all my privileges and said if I wanted to do football, I'd be on my own. So, I did the only thing I felt I could do at the time. I packed up football and pursued medicine."

I blinked a few times. "Woah, I'm sorry."

He shrugged. "I admire you for being brave enough to pursue your own dreams—fuck everybody else."

I chuckled at that but blushed in the process. "Well, your situation was a lot more drastic than mine. If my parents threatened me like that, I'd maybe have listened. And then I'd go through life, fainting at every needle I see."

He chuckled. "You're afraid of needles?"

"Shitless. That's one way I could tell I wasn't meant to be a doctor," I grinned.

Carter chuckled, and I found myself grinning like a schoolgirl at the sound of his deep, bassy voice that seemed to go right through me.

When our gazes held, I quickly cleared my throat. "Do you ever wish you could do football and not medicine?"

"Not at all. I loved football at the time and was pretty pissed I couldn't pursue it as a career, but now I really love what I do and

wouldn't trade it for anything."

I smiled. "That's good."

"You'll be fine, Amanda. The first year out of college is always the hardest, but you'll get by."

"I hope so."

Carter looked up, and my gaze followed his to the darkening skies.

"Shit, looks like it's about to rain," I said.

He glanced at his watch. "Yeah, and that UTV won't be back for a while." As soon as Carter finished his sentence, a light drizzle of rain came down.

Carter muttered a curse and looked around the empty stretch of land that surrounded us. I grabbed the bag Mom had given me from the truck and squealed as the rain fell harder.

I gasped at its suddenness, my bag under my arm as I stared at an already-soaked Carter. Thunder rumbled, and I gasped, looking around with nowhere to go.

"We can't stay here," Carter exclaimed, and I nodded.

Chapter 5

Amanda

I didn't know where we could go, seeing civilization was miles away, but I didn't want to just stand in the rain. Carter took the lead going down the path we'd come. I followed behind, using the bag as a cover for my head as I ran.

The rain continued to pour even harder, so much so that it was hard to see. We were both soaked with no clue of where to go. But we ran blindly down a slope without a clear path. The trees were tall, and I had to dodge a few bushes.

I didn't keep track of how long we walked, running in between, but it felt like a long time because my feet began to ache. I stopped to catch my breath despite being drenched in rain. Realizing I'd stopped, Carter stopped as well, raking his fingers through his hair.

"Maybe this was a bad idea," he said before he began to laugh.

I couldn't help myself. I joined in on the laughter, rain pelting against my skin, my clothes clad to my body.

"Maybe."

We walked for a bit longer, and then Carter pointed to a huge tree. Without saying a word, we moved towards it and sat underneath. We still felt the rain, but the effects weren't as great under the tree.

I sighed, running my hand over my face, and glanced at Carter.

"This was the last thing I imagined would happen," he said.

"Yeah, it sucks."

"This island gets a lot of rain sometimes. We'll probably be soaked for twenty-minutes before it stops," he offered a stiff smile.

"I think we should try and see if we can find some shelter. What if the rain doesn't stop anytime soon?" I asked.

"You're right, but we don't want to stray too far from the UTV."

I grinned. "I think we already have."

He chuckled. "You're right."

Carter got up and began to lead the way to God knows where. I was behind, unable to stop myself from staring at his muscular body. With his shirt clad to his skin, I could see every contour of his body—his firm butt and narrow hips. He was pleasant to look at, to say the

least, and I didn't mind staring and thinking about possibilities with a man like him.

Surely, he had a lot of experience up his sleeve and could satisfy a virgin like me –

I stopped my thoughts suddenly, knowing it was wrong to think about him in such a manner. He was Dad's friend—a man I'd only met a day ago. These thoughts were unlike me.

"Hear that," Carter said after some minutes, and I paused, stopping to listen.

All I could hear was the violent crash of rain hitting the trees and the ground. I glanced at him, confused, and he smiled.

"Sounds like a waterfall is nearby, and if that's the case, let's hope there's a grotto behind. That could provide us with some shelter."

I nodded and followed behind Carter, whose steps became more purposeful as he followed the sound. The roaring became louder the closer we went, and I, too, became hopeful for something to shield us from the rain.

The rain eased a little but still continued to fall. I paused in my tracks as soon as I saw the waterfall ahead of us, cascading against rocks in the pool below. It was a rich blue, like a hidden gem around the lush green foliage.

Carter turned to me and smiled, and my heart fluttered. "I was right. Come on," he said, and I followed behind him, skipping over rocks and branches as we moved further towards the falls.

The air around it was cool and misty, and the water crystal clear. Carter walked to the side where a grotto was. It extended from the sides, moving directly behind the falls. Carter went ahead to inspect the area before he called me along. I went, crouching down as I entered the small cave. The rocks were damp and a bit mossy, but they provided shelter from the rain, and that was all that mattered to me at the moment.

I sighed once I took a seat, now feeling uncomfortable in the wet clothes, but what choice did I have?

"I'm sure someone will find us here. Beautiful place like this has to get some sightseers."

I shrugged. "It's a great distance from the road."

Carter said nothing. Only glanced at me. "Do you have your phone? I left mine back at the hotel.

"Oh, right!" I said as I got to digging into the small Fanny pack

strapped around my waist.

I smiled once I pulled it out and realized it was a bit damp but still working. My smile fell once I realized there wasn't any service.

"No service," I informed Carter, feeling a tinge of disappointment.

"Don't worry, once the rain stops, we'll get out of here and try again."

"Okay," I said before reaching for the bag Mom had given me. I dug inside and rummaged through its contents. She was right; it was mostly snacks, a bottle of water, a tube of sunscreen, and a scarf.

I handed Carter a chocolate bar.

"Thanks," he said before he tore it open and took a bite.

He smelled like a rainforest, woody and fresh, with hints of his cologne still peeking through the wetness. I swallowed and tried my best not to think of being stranded with the only man my body had ever responded to. It didn't help being so close to him.

We said nothing for a while, and I figured, like me, he'd be hoping for a way to get out of here before nightfall.

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About thirty minutes later, the rain stopped, and Carter immediately got up and headed outside. I followed after him, breathing in the scent of the freshness. As far as I looked, all I could see was tall trees.

"We should try the phone again," he said, and I immediately handed it to him. He raised it in the air, walking in circles, trying to find a signal, but by the frown on his face, I knew it was useless.

He sighed heavily, dropping his hands to his side before he handed it back to me. In doing so, his gaze roamed my frame, his Adam's apple bobbing before he looked away.

"Er, we should probably change out of these clothes. Let them air out for a bit so we don't catch a cold," he said.

My pulse quickened. "And change into what?"

His jaw ticked as he stared at me. "Underwear, I suppose. It's almost five. I think it's time to start thinking worse-case scenarios," he said.

I swallowed. "You don't think anyone will find us for tonight?"

"I doubt it. We're about twenty minutes out from the assembly

point, and even if we find our way back, it's unlikely there'll be anyone there."

I nodded while my brain raced.

"I'll walk out and see if I see anyone or a building or something or if I can pick up a signal–"

"You're leaving me here?"

His gaze softened. "I won't be long."

"What if you get lost?"

"I won't be that far out."

I straightened myself and nodded. "Okay, but don't stay long, okay?"

His grey eyes met mine. "I won't."

I watched as he left, burrowing his way through bushes until he was out of sight.

I muttered a curse, raking my fingers through my hair and looking around. I was almost tempted to head back into the small cave but figured Carter was probably right. It was probably wise to get out of the wet clothes.

Out of habit, I looked around before I began stripping my clothes. I was just happy I was wearing a bra today of all days. I pulled my shirt off and then my shorts before I spread them out over a rock further away from the falls. I shivered at the cool wind against my skin but knew that it was because I was wet.

I quickly ran to get Mom's scarf from my bag and was happy it was big enough to wrap around my waist. Surely, Carter had seen an endless number of females in bikinis before. This wasn't any different, right? It was appropriate given the circumstances.

My shoes went next, and I wiggled my toes as I neared the water's edge. The fresh water was cool between my toes, and I was tempted to go for a swim, but I'd had enough soaking for today.

Afterward, I went to nibble on my half-eaten chocolate bar and began to wonder why Carter hadn't gotten back as yet. I hoped he hadn't wandered too far. He was still a mere stranger, but I knew I could trust him.

The wait felt like an eternity, but then the bushes rustled, and Carter stepped through. By the look on his face, I knew he wasn't successful.

I hugged my shoulders as he approached.

"No luck?"

He scoffed. “I’d have better luck finding a needle in a haystack. There’s nothing, and I’m still unable to get any service.”

I sighed, pressing my forehead against my knee.

“Listen, we’ll be alright. We just have to get through tonight, and then we’re okay.”

Easy for him to say. I didn’t know what I feared most: wild animals, the possibility of catching pneumonia, or being stuck alone with the only man who could get my panties wet.

Chapter 6

Carter

I'd left Amanda at the cave with the undying hope that I'd find someone to take us out of here. The desire was so intense my hope almost became a prayer.

That was only because I didn't know how well I'd do being stuck in a cave with a woman who'd had me questioning myself from the very moment I saw her.

When Paul and I agreed on Tahiti, he told me who would be there, and I didn't think anything of it. As soon as I saw Amanda, I realized she was exactly my type but younger; she was curvy, had that almost-jet black hair with striking, big blue eyes that felt like she was assessing your soul each time she looked at you.

As soon as I saw her standing inside that lobby, my heart had lurched, and my cock had stirred. As soon as I found out who she really was, I knew I couldn't have her despite my instant desires. I'd spent my life having everyone I wanted, and then she came along– the epitome of looking but unable to touch, wanting and being unable to have.

Maybe this was my punishment in life or the karma people had always talked about. I'd spent my life as a player, yet here I was, stranded with a woman I couldn't even look too hard at. Maybe this was my payback for breaking so many hearts—especially in my college days. Being trapped with Amanda would be my payback. Had to be.

I muttered a curse as I dropped my hand to the side and kicked angrily at the bushes. I still couldn't get any signal, and after trying for almost ten minutes, I knew it was futile.

I had to find my way back to Amanda and scold myself whenever my gaze lingered on her, whenever my thoughts would stray to unceremonious things. I already had a vivid picture of her in my head, clothes clamped to her body, showcasing her luscious curves. Water dripped from her skin, from her succulent lips.

"Get it together, Carter," I scolded myself as I flashed the bushes from my path. The last thing I wanted was for Amanda to think she was trapped here with a creep.

Her dad would want me to protect her, and that should be my

sole focus. Nothing else.

I went back to the waterfall to find her clothes laying on a rock. I clenched my teeth to stop myself from producing inappropriate thoughts. She was nestled in the cave, her knees drawn to her chest, more of her skin exposed to me than I'd ever seen. I tried my best not to look at her, even if it meant not meeting her gaze when we spoke.

"I should change out of these, too," I said after a while, getting up to strip myself of my wet clothes. I laid them on a rock beside Amanda's clothes and sighed. Us being in just underwear didn't make matters any easier. In fact, I had a feeling this would be the most difficult night of my life.

I went back to the cave, noticing the way she tried not to look directly at me. She was shy; that much was obvious from the first meeting, and I was almost certain she'd never had a man, too.

Shoot, even more reason to stay away. I wasn't deserving.

I took a seat beside her and looked out. "If it hadn't rained, I would have made a fire, but everything's wet now," I sighed.

"Yeah, I don't think it will be that cold tonight, though. A perk of being on a tropical island," she smiled, and I did, too.

"You're right. I suppose this is kinda like camping."

She scoffed. "More like the hunger games."

I laughed louder than I'd expected. "Seems accurate enough."

Amanda sighed lightly, and a pregnant silence fell between us. It was almost as if my senses heightened. I could smell her freshness—almost taste it on my tongue—and feel her heat radiating from her.

My eyes drifted unintentionally to her cleavage, the mound of her creamy breasts peeking out from the top of her bra. They rose with every breath she took, and my mouth watered in the process, longing to run my tongue along her supple flesh and taste her soft skin.

My cock stirred, and as soon as I willed myself to look away, Amanda turned and met my gaze. I should have looked away, but her dazzling blue eyes held me in place, and I found myself captivated all over again. I followed every movement of her eyes, noticing the way it dropped to my lips and how she swallowed before she tore her gaze away.

My brows furrowed, and I wondered if I was thinking straight. I knew the look in her eyes, and judging by the direction of her gaze, I was pretty sure she wanted to kiss me. Did she?

As I continued to stare at her, sparring with the thoughts in my

head, Amanda looked my way again, and it was my time to admire her full, juicy lips, looking as inviting as ever.

Still, as much as I wanted to kiss her, I wanted it to be her doing. Whatever she wanted, she'd have to pursue. My brain already told me this was wrong, but I couldn't fight the urges I had. The intense need to damn it all to hell and have my way with her.

Amanda leaned into me, her scent filling my nostrils as she moved closer. My eyes were strained on her lips, watching as they parted as they approached mine. I couldn't wait a second longer; I met her halfway and pressed my lips to hers, confirming they were as soft as I'd imagined.

I slid my tongue into her warm mouth, testing the waters, wanting to know if we were on the same page. Our tongues touched, and just like that, heat erupted inside me. I held her at the small of her waist and pulled her closer, deepening the kiss and exploring her sweet mouth. There was an immediate spark that traveled down my spine, leaving me eager for more. Her breath quickened, and my heart raced as the kiss went from sweet to passionate. I caressed Amanda's tongue, feeling my desire for her heighten as our tongues sparred.

A soft moan escaped her lips, and my grip tightened on her, my cock stirring as I searched for something more.

But just as my manhood began to harden in my pants, my nagging subconscious spoke out to me, telling me I was making a mistake.

I broke the kiss and cleared my throat. "I'm sorry. That wasn't supposed to happen."

Her cheeks reddened like the color of beets, and her big blue eyes suddenly filled with embarrassment.

I swallowed, never wanting to hurt her, but knew it was better to stop things now than wait for it to escalate.

Amanda nodded, managing a fake smile. "It's fine."

Fuck.

Chapter 7

Amanda

I don't know what came over me, but having Carter beside me and knowing he wore nothing but boxers did something to me. The feeling had consumed my body, pulsating between my thighs, and I just couldn't help myself. The pull almost felt magnetic as we sat there, and for a fleeting second, I decided to give it a try.

When it actually happened, I was surprised. Even more so when he kissed back; I'd found it hard to believe but had clung onto every second, loving every bit of it.

When Carter pulled away, I wasn't surprised that he did. The surprise was him kissing me back, but I knew it wouldn't go further than that, even though I wanted to. I didn't have that kind of luck.

After apologizing, Carter got up and went further towards the pool of the falls. I watched him with my cheeks burning from what happened.

Soon, it began to get dark, and the air was cooler than it had been earlier but not cold. I folded myself in that small cave, getting weary of sitting on the hard rocks, but what choice did I have?

Carter came back once it was dark out, the full moon the only source of light we had. He smiled and took a seat beside me.

"Are you okay?"

I nodded. "Yeah."

"What's something you wish you were doing right now?" He asked.

Apart from kissing you?

"Er, well I really wish I was cuddled up in bed eating shrimp tempura rolls and watching my favorite show," I said.

His brow raised at that, a small look of surprise on his face. "You– that's actually my favorite thing to eat," he said, and my eyes widened in awe.

"It is?" I asked

He nodded. "I like sushi overall, but shrimp tempura is my favorite."

I smiled. "That's amazing."

He chuckled, and I cleared my throat, pulling my legs up. “How about you?”

He shrugged. “I just wish I was someplace drier.”

I grinned. “Yeah.”

“We should be fine here tonight, though. Luckily, there aren’t any wild animals around.”

“Thank God for small mercies, right.”

He nodded. “Definitely.”

I yawned then, suddenly feeling like I wanted to lay down. “I think I need to lay down a bit,” I said, emptying the contents from Mom’s bag and placing them to the side. I then laid the bag across the flat expanse of rock, leaving a piece for Carter in case he wanted to share, although that meant he’d have to come really close to me. That wasn’t much of a choice in the small space, though; if he wanted distance, the only other option was pointy rocks.

“Good night,” I whispered before I turned my back to him and laid down, a small shiver passing through me as my skin touched the cold ground.

“Good night,” he said. As much as I wanted to sleep, I couldn’t with Carter right beside me.

He didn’t lay down right away, but with my eyes wide open, I knew exactly when he did. He sighed heavily, and for a while, I heard nothing but his soft breathing while my eyes were still wide open, my body rebellious.

I didn’t know what was happening to me, but it was unlike anything I’d ever experienced before. The flesh between my legs pulsed softly, and I felt an intense urge to touch it—to rid myself of the throbbing ache.

I knew it was because of Carter. I knew it was because I wanted him, and that kiss earlier had only made my desire for him stronger.

I swallowed and tightly closed my eyes, willing myself not to make another mistake like I’d done earlier. I didn’t want Carter to have the wrong thoughts of me, and I certainly didn’t want to make it awkward while being stranded here alone with him.

I had to get a grip—and fast.

I closed my eyes and tried my hardest to think about anything that wasn’t him. This was out of character for me, and I didn’t want a stranger being disappointed in me like most of my family members.

I pulled in a soft breath and was happy when sleep welcomed

me.

**

My eyes fluttered open, and it took me a second for my thoughts to flow—reminding me of where I was.

To my dismay, it was still dark, though I'd hoped for the opposite. I'd planned on sleeping the entire night and waking up to sunshine.

My body stiffened when I also realized Carter was beside me. In fact, I was nestled into him, my backside against his front, his breath against my neck.

I bit my lips, wondering how I'd gotten myself in such a predicament. But he was warm against me, and I felt warm nestled against him.

My heart lurched further in my chest when I realized something hard was poking against my ass, and from what I'd seen earlier, he had no pockets that could store anything. I was suddenly breathless, heat blossoming inside my gut as the prospect of him having an erection dawned on me.

My vagina began to pulsate again as if suddenly aware of what was happening. Judging by Carter's soft snores, I knew he was asleep, which meant that this wasn't intentional.

I bit my lips and clamped my eyes shut, knowing the right thing would be to move, but I didn't want to. It felt so good, and with Carter's erection just inches from my passage, the arousal thrumming inside me was uncontrollable.

I took a chance and wiggled my ass a little against his boner. My pulse quickened, and arousal pooled inside me like liquid fire.

I wanted this so much. Gosh, it was almost painful.

Carter grunted softly, and I held back a gasp when he placed his hand on my hip. My skin was set ablaze, my body surrendering to the pleasure I felt.

I'd never had a man so close to me in such an intimate manner, and for sure, I had never felt someone's erection against me. I wanted to explore it more; I wanted everything.

Slowly, I turned towards him, causing him to shuffle even more. I was face to face with him, watching his sleeping form and his toned muscles on full display, thinking about how perfect he was.

"Carter," I whispered, my voice slightly shaky and broken.

He responded the second time, slowly opening his eyes to look at me. My heart raced even more, now frantic, as I met his gaze.

He frowned after a second, and then he bounded upright, his gaze immediately moving to his boxers.

"Fuck!" He hissed, about to get up. I quickly held his hand, keeping him in place.

"Don't go," I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

"I'm sorry, I–"

"I want you," I blurted.

He froze, his gaze holding mine, a thousand questions in his darkened gaze.

"Amanda…"

"I've never felt this way towards anyone before," I admitted boldly, surprising myself.

My heart stopped in my chest as I waited for a response from him. I knew I'd never show my face again if he rejected me, but I knew it was a possibility.

He swallowed visibly. "I don't want to hurt you," he said, and my eyes pricked with tears.

"You won't. I want this and to not have you is what hurts the most."

Without saying a word, he reached for my face, cupping my cheeks with his large hands. He held my gaze and made sure I was looking right at him as he asked, "Are you sure?"

I was quick to nod. "I've never been this certain of anything in my life," I confessed.

A small smile tilted the corner of his mouth before he leaned into me and kissed me yet again. I shivered as soon as his mouth caught mine. It was like I'd finally have something I'd been missing my entire life. I slipped my hand around his neck and kissed him with everything I had in me. I was no pro, but I was hungry for this man, so I expressed that in the best way I knew how. His hands were like fire against my skin, flooding my body with an insatiable heat that fueled every single nerve in my body.

His lips were soft, and I didn't want to stop kissing them. The more I did, the more I realized my panties were soaking with my arousal. I could feel it flood my panties, even more flowing with every caress of his lips.

I moaned against his skilled mouth, dragging my hand up his

silky hair and seeking more of his mouth.

Carter eased further into me, causing me to slowly lay back until my back was against the ground again. He towered over me like a beast, his lips not leaving mine, his boner brushing against my leg.

My hand trailed down his back, and I pulled him even closer to me, wanting to feel his pulsating erection against me.

I gasped once his bulge pressed into me, a promise of what was to come. I gasped once Carter broke the kiss, his lips traveling across my cheek and down my neck. He kissed the column of my neck and suckled softly, and I whimpered at the pleasure that spurred within me.

Carter continued his trail down my chest, peppering my skin with kisses. My breath left my lungs when he unclipped the front of my bra, causing my breasts to spill out in front of him.

He looked down on them like a wild animal, his gaze shifting from one to the other. I moaned when he caught one in his hand, the other in his mouth, and began sucking softly, his hand molding the other. I stared up at the ceiling of the cave, looking for the stars that floated around my head.

It was too good, and I was burning with need and desire for Carter. My panties were soaked, and my flesh begged for his touch.

“Carter,” I whispered, reaching down to kiss him.

He said nothing but left my breasts to trail kisses along my stomach. My stomach pooled with heat as he laced my skin with kisses.

My heart was beating so fast I thought I’d pass out. When he eased up and hooked his fingers in the hem of my panties, I reached for his hand to stop him in the process.

He stopped, staring at me with a look of confusion on his face.

“Is everything okay?” He asked me.

I swallowed, wanting an opportunity to catch my breath. “I– I’ve never done this before,” I confessed.

He nodded. “I’ll take care of you,” he said, and I believed him.

I laid back down and closed my eyes, feeling his every movement as he dragged my panties down my legs, leaving me naked on the ground.

I opened my eyes just in time to see him taking off his own boxers; his gaze trained on my exposed quim in front of him.

My pulse quickened as soon as I saw his throbbing manhood,

which was way bigger than I could ever imagine. Yet, instead of getting cold feet, I was eager to have him inside me, filling out every inch with his girthy hood.

I parted my legs, feeling my wetness there. Carter positioned himself between me and lowered himself onto me. He didn't enter me right away. Instead, he kissed me while his hardness poked at my stomach. I wrapped my hands around his neck and deepened the kiss.

Carter's hand moved between us, and I moaned against his mouth when I felt his fingers against my wetness. He rubbed my clit, and I shivered beneath him, caught off guard by the sudden bolt of pleasure that passed through me.

Just when I thought it couldn't get any better, he pressed two fingers at my entrance and slowly inserted them inside my cavern. I tore my mouth away from his and gasped, moaning fervently as pleasure filled me. My walls stretched to accommodate him, but I was so wet there wasn't any strain or discomfort on my part. I couldn't believe how good it felt.

"Oh, that feels so good," I said.

Carter kissed across my face. "The real thing will feel a hundred times better," he said, driving his fingers as far as they could go.

My walls clung to him; my brain gone to mush as I basked in the pleasure I received. Carter stroked my flesh until I was sure I was about to burst into a million pieces. My body quivered, and I moaned loudly, preparing myself for my climax.

But then something happened that I hadn't anticipated. Carter pulled his finger out, leaving my walls to grip onto emptiness and for me to stare at him in confusion.

As my lips parted in response, he began to stroke himself in his hand, and I was suddenly filled with an intense urge to touch it.

"May I?" I asked.

"Please, go ahead," he said as he straddled my hips. I reached for him, pulling his hard length in my hands and feeling the strength that exuded from it. Though I couldn't see much, feeling alone made me more aroused than I'd been earlier.

Carter lowered himself between my legs yet again, and I laid there staring at him, waiting for the moment to happen. My breath caught in my throat when I felt his tip against my entrance, hard against my flesh. His gaze was steady on me, and I could notice that much in the dim lighting.

I licked across my lips, my heart pounding in my chest as the

pressure increased against my skin, my flesh slightly parting as Carter pressed further. I moaned when he slipped past my folds but not deep enough to break my hymen. He had only the tip in, and even that felt huge.

I widened my legs as far as they could go, gasping when Carter punctured my flesh, lodging deep inside me. I bared my teeth and clamped my eyes shut as his thick cock stretched my flesh and caressed my walls. The stinging was intense, and my body reacted by clamping around him, making it more uncomfortable.

Carter lowered himself onto me, and his manhood shifted deeper, my mouth falling agape as I tried to get used to him being inside me.

"How do you feel?" He asked me, his hand bracing against my leg to keep it apart.

My cheeks burned hotly, and I was happy he couldn't really see that much.

"Like I'm being ripped apart," I told him truthfully, my breathing uneven as I tried to get my plundering heart under control.

"All that will change, trust me," he said, filling me with soft strokes.

I moaned as his hardness rubbed against my flesh, lessening the ache that I felt from him being inside me. I whimpered as it got better and better and reached for Carter's face to taste his soft lips.

I found that kissing him brought me some comfort while he moved back and forth inside me.

His pace slowly increased, so much so now that I could hear my wetness with each stroke. My body was on fire, and with Carter's pelvis rubbing against my stomach, I was certain I'd go up in flames.

His scent, his cock inside me, and his soft grunts all came together in a mixture that made my head swirl.

"You feel so good, Amanda," he said as he went faster, pulling tiny gasps from my throat as he explored my channel deeper and deeper.

His slick body slid against mine, warm and hard, while his length caressed my virgin walls. The ache I'd felt was distant, long replaced by an increasing pleasure that made my brain putty.

"Yes," I sighed inside the cave, taking in a deep breath as Carter's strokes became more punctuated.

He grunted, burying his face in my neck. My body trembled involuntarily as I felt his hot breath against my skin. I closed my eyes

and basked in the feeling of having Carter in me and having my virginity taken by him. It felt like a dream, though the ground was hard on my back, but it was too good.

He went even faster, and my walls began to grip onto him, my breath quickening as he took me to new heights.

“Yes, oh that feels so good,” I said, now dragging my fingers down his back and against his ass. I felt every thrust of his hips that filled me hard and deep.

I whimpered with each thrust, feeling almost overwhelmed with the pleasure that now consumed me. Carter’s grunts increased, and I felt every inch of him, filling me and stretching me wide.

The more my walls clung to him, the more his pace increased, and soon, I felt the pressure building in my gut, almost like a volcano inching towards an explosion.

Carter muttered something indecipherable as he slammed into me, not letting up for even a second. I cried out, staring into the darkness of the cave as the pleasure rushed towards me chaotically. I felt like I was on the brink of losing my mind and gripped Carter as if I were gripping onto my sanity.

He went deeper and faster, and I cried his name, which echoed in the cave while a sizzling rush of release crashed into me. A shudder passed through me, followed by undying shivers as sweet pleasure coursed through every inch of me.

Carter still continued to plunge inside, his grunts louder. Then he bucked and cried out a guttural moan. He swelled inside me, and my eyes rolled back in my head as something hot and thick splashed inside me. Carter’s thrusts were quick and disoriented as he came. I continued to shiver, unable to believe that something could feel this good.

Chapter 8

Amanda

When my eyes fluttered open for the second time, it was morning. I realized Carter wasn't beside me, and my heart skipped a beat as panic bubbled in my stomach. I bounded from my position, quickly pinning my brain place [A1]and wrapping the scarf around my hips.

As I got up, the soreness between my legs reminded me of last night, and my body flooded with warmth. As I made my way down, I realized my aches were more than just between my legs. Yet all that seemed to disappear when I saw Carter in the falls, the morning sun shining down on him as he waded in the water.

I grinned, and when he looked in my direction, my blush deepened.

He waved, and I waved back. "Join me!" He called over the crashing waterfall.

I bit my lips as I contemplated his request, but it didn't take long to decide. I skipped over rocks, hastily wanting to join him as he watched my every step.

When I stepped into the water, I shivered from its coldness but desperately moved towards Carter as I knew he'd bring me warmth.

He pulled me to him when I was close enough, both his hands around my waist as he stared into my eyes.

"Good morning, beautiful," he said, and without awaiting my response, he kissed me tenderly on the lips. I closed my eyes as I familiarized myself with his soft lips, his firm body against mine. Thoughts of last night came crashing back to me, making me aroused all over again.

He broke the kiss, his gaze still fastened on my lips regardless. "How do you feel?" He asked me.

"Different," I said, smiling.

His brow raised at that. "In what way."

"Well, I'm no longer a virgin," I said softly, finding it hard to believe I was saying this to a man's face.

"Is it a good feeling?" He asked me, a ghost of a smile playing at his lips.

“Yes, I enjoyed it very much,” I informed, fire on my cheeks.

He leaned closer to me, his forehead pressed against mine. “You like the feel of my cock filling you?” He said, his voice deep and sultry.

My pulse quickened, and I swallowed. “I do… a lot.”

He smiled then, displaying a straight line of white teeth.

“You intrigue me, Amanda.”

I giggled as I kissed him. It felt so natural, us being here like this. After last night, there was not a bit of insecurity left in me. I knew Carter wanted me, and that made me feel more confident than ever.

We kissed and waded around in the water, talking and laughing, though I knew our paradise would soon come to an end.

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“We should try and find a way out of here,” I said as we sat eating the remaining snacks we’d left behind. “As much as I’d like to stay here longer, I don’t want my parents worried. I know Mom must be hyperventilating.”

Carter nodded, his gaze soft as he looked at me. “You’re right. It’s early now so we’re bound to see someone, and it doesn’t look like it’s about to rain again soon.”

“Yeah,” I said as I cleared my throat. There was still an elephant in the room I wanted to address, but I didn’t know how to get the question across or if it was even wise to ask.

I pulled on my dried clothes and watched as Carter did the same. I didn’t take my eyes off his body the whole time, knowing I’d miss it once we went back to reality. The thought jarred a little at my heartstrings, but I quickly tore my gaze away and cleared my throat.

The weather was perfect today, and I tried my best to concentrate on that rather than what would happen once we got back.

Once I was done, I wrapped my hair in a ponytail and followed behind Carter, who began leading the way.

As soon as we were about to turn to leave the falls altogether, he stopped and took a look back before turning to me, a melancholic smile on his face.

“It was nice while it lasted, right?” I asked, wondering if he was thinking the same thing as me.

“It was,” he said. “I wish things were different,” he said before he continued walking.

I followed behind him, wondering what he meant, but it was pretty clear. He probably wanted this to continue after this, but we both knew it couldn’t. And that was the horrible part. Carter had just confirmed that no amount of me dreaming that he was mine would make it possible.

An emotion tugged at my heart, and I swallowed the lump in my throat as I followed behind him, each step heavy as we tried to make our way back to civilization.

We didn’t remember the path we came, but we went uphill, hoping we’d find the assembly point we’d stopped at on the tour.

After several minutes, I stopped to catch my breath, sitting on a log that had fallen down. Carter stopped as well, not questioning why I’d stopped, only taking a seat beside me.

“Are you okay?”

I cleared my throat and managed a stiff smile. “Yeah, I just… I can’t say I’m excited to get back.”

His forehead wrinkled. “You’re not?”

“I mean, I don’t like sleeping on the cold ground, but then I’ll have to get back to my grandparents, my perfect parents and then there’s just me.”

Carter reached for my hand, and my heart swelled in my chest.

I blinked a couple times. “I’m so different from every one of them, and I just don’t want to go back to feeling like the odd ball out y’know? They’re all so grounded in everything, and I’m like a leaf in the ocean, drifting aimlessly.” I shook my head, casting my gaze to the ground to hide my humiliation.

“I’m sorry you feel that way, but they always say comparison is the thief of joy. Maybe you’re just not ready to make your mark, and that’s fine.”

I smiled. “Thanks.”

His grip tightened on my hand, and my eyes burned with tears because the connection to Carter was suddenly so strong, and I didn’t know how to explain it.

“Where do we even go from here?” I couldn’t help but ask? I needed to know before I went back to the resort.

There was a short silence, and when he gently slipped his hand away, I knew the answer wouldn’t be what I wanted to hear.

“Unfortunately, this is where it ends. We live states apart and there’s the matter of you being my friend’s daughter. I uh– I don’t want there to be any problems.”

I was nodding even before he was done with his sentence because I knew that would be the response. It was a valid one, I just hoped it would be different. Silly me.

His Adam’s Apple bobbed. “If I could, I’d claim you publicly in a heartbeat, but there are too many things at play here, Amanda.”

I nodded quickly. “Of course. I totally understand. I feel the same,” I lied, offering a tight smile. I’d claim him regardless.

I got up from the log and started walking. “We should get going,” I said while my heart broke into a million pieces. I just couldn’t allow him to see how much I was falling apart, so I mustered as much courage as I could and kept my cool.

The rest of the walk was silent, and I was happy about that. Enough was said, and I didn’t want to get myself flustered or give away that I wasn’t as nonchalant about the idea as I’d put across.

I wondered if this was what it was usually like for virgins or was it just me? Did people usually get attached like this after sex, or was it just me?

We continued to walk for some more minutes, trying to navigate through the forest and figure out the best route to take. It almost felt like we were in a losing battle, and the regret of leaving the falls felt even stronger as we tried to get back.

After my conversation with Carter, I started to get more frustrated as the minutes passed. I stopped to wipe the gleam of sweat from my forehead, but Carter was still moving ahead, seemingly more enthusiastic about freedom than I was.

“Oh, I think I see the assembly point. I kinda see the rails,” he said, looking back at me, a half-smile on his handsome face.

“Yeah?”

He nodded. “Come on, it’s not too far,” he said, standing there waiting for me. With the way his eyes moved along my body, all sorts of feelings resurfaced, including my strong desire for him.

Once I caught up with him, he held my hand and guided the path. I couldn’t seem to concentrate on anything but his hand on mine and the heat that consumed my body from the innocent touch.

We continued to walk for about five minutes before we arrived at the assembly point. Admittedly, I laughed in joy once we arrived, remembering when I doubted getting to this point. Carter pulled me in

for a hug, his joy evident on his face. As soon as my face was pressed to his, my throat constricted, and I felt the tears bottling up inside me. I didn't know what was wrong with me, but I felt like a woman in love who was about to lose it all. I stayed against his chest for as long as possible, knowing that a time like this would never happen again after today.

When I pulled apart, I mustered a smile, hoping my glistening eyes didn't give away too much.

"We just have to wait."

Suddenly my phone pinged, and my heart lurched as the messages and missed calls came popping up on screen. I gasped, looking to Carter who seemed just as amused.

"There's signal!" I exclaimed as I scanned the missed calls, which were obviously from my mother.

I immediately rang her back, on the tip of my toes, as I waited for her to answer.

"Amanda, Oh, my God!" She shrieked. "I was worried sick! Where are you sweetheart?" She asked, her voice breaking.

"I'm fine, Mom. We're both fine. Carter and I got lost for a bit and had to camp overnight, but we made our way back to the peak. Could you send someone to get us?"

"Of– of course. My gosh, I'm so happy you're both alright," she cried. "I'm heading to the front desk right now to tell them. They went back to get you know but said there weren't any signs. Paul is talking to the police as we speak; we were planning to send out a search party," she explained.

I snorted a laugh. "Mom, I'm fine, and I'm sorry you guys were worried, okay?"

"Thank God. Uh—I'll send someone right away, okay? Don't move this time."

I grinned. "We won't."

When the call ended, I sighed and glanced at Carter, who seemed to be staring into my soul.

"They're sending someone."

He nodded. "Good." He went to lean against the railing, taking a long whiff of the fresh air. I joined him, and we stood there in silence, staring at the view with a million things on my mind—all comprising him.

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I got up from my stupor when I saw a van rounding the corner about an hour later and headed towards us. My heart lurched in my chest, knowing this would definitely be it.

Carter and I shared a look just before the car stopped at our feet. I was surprised when my mom jumped out of the front, her arms outstretched as she ran towards me. I couldn't help but laugh as I collected her in my arms for a big hug.

She laughed between tears, hugging me tightly and kissing along my face. When she pulled back, she cupped my face with her hands, tears streaming from her blue eyes.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're alright. Gosh, you don't know how worried I was," she said before she hugged me again.

"I'm sorry you had to go through that."

She sniffed. "I'm just happy you're in one piece." She glanced over my shoulder at Carter. "Thank you for taking care of her," she said.

Carter only nodded, a small smile on his face.

Mom sighed. "You must be so hungry and tired," she said, her gaze roaming from my head to my toe. "Oh, honey."

We got inside the car. Mom remained at the front while Carter and I went to the back. Mom was drilling us with questions, Carter obliging by answering most of them. I didn't want to talk much and give away what had happened. I didn't want to remind myself of the good times only to disappoint myself with reality.

As we neared the resort, I glanced down at my hand as I felt Carter's touch. He had two fingers slightly touching mine. I glanced at him and saw all the emotions in his eyes. But then the car came to a halt, and he pulled them away.

I swallowed the painful lump in my throat and tried to pull up the smile, which was only meant to reassure my family, who were all gathered at the front.

All eyes were on me as I stepped out of the car—including strangers who had no idea of what had happened. Dad was the first to run to me, his chuckle deep as he hugged me, telling me about how worried he'd been.

I reassured all of them that I was fine, slightly overwhelmed by the attention and the questions. I knew they were concerned, though, and tried my best to answer as cordially as I could.

My gaze averted to Carter walking away—no doubt to his room.

I suddenly wished it was back to being just us two again.

Chapter 9

Carter

How was it even possible to miss someone you'd only met two days ago?

I'd spent the night with multiple women in the past, yet none had ever left me wanting as much as I wanted Amanda. The desire was strong—like a magnetic pull I had never felt in my life. It was scary, to say the least. At thirty-eight, I'd long given up hope on finding the love people talked about so much.

But here I was, feeling something that I couldn't explain for a woman I had no right feeling it with. Amanda was as off-limits as they come, yet she was entirely the type of woman I'd usually go for—physically, at least.

She had curves to die for, all proportioned in the right places, and I simply couldn't get enough. But I'd realized it was more than just the physical attraction. I wanted to wrap myself around her mind and know her every thought. I wanted to rid her of the bad ones if I could, and I wanted to protect her in a way I'd never felt before.

But. There was a huge but–one I didn't know if we could get past. Paul was my friend and the only genuine one I'd had in a long time. I didn't want to lose that, and I knew, from how highly he spoke of Amanda, that I'd ruin our friendship if I was ever foolish enough to pursue Amanda.

Could I even risk it when there were still a lot of things I needed to know about her? She might've felt like the one in the moment, but we'd be forced to be together, the only person we had at the time. I didn't want the honeymoon phase of the situation to fade and end up regretting my decision in the end.

For the first time in a long while, I was uncertain what to do. My mind told me staying at a distance was the wisest idea, but my body and soul craved the opposite. In my head, I wanted to be at that cave again, cuddled up beside her, my cock hard with my iron-clad desire for her.

That was what I wanted. I wanted her by my side.

**

After soaking in a hot bath for about an hour, I decided to get ready for dinner with the Jeffries.

I put on one of my favorite clothes, brushed my hair, and applied some perfume before I realized I was making an extra effort for Amanda. Normally, it didn't matter to me what I wore, but suddenly, the need to impress her was strong in my chest.

I sighed heavily, knowing I was burrowing down the wrong path. How could I even look my friend in the eye tonight, knowing I'd taken Amanda's sweet virginity and had no shame in wanting to do it again?

I made my way to the new restaurant, and, as expected, everyone was there waiting for me. I knew I was late, but I had to muster the courage to see Amanda again and not lose my mind in the process.

Yet, as I walked towards their table, she was the first one I saw sitting there. Our gazes met briefly, and she shyly looked away, her cheeks roasting with a slight tinge of red. I always found it cute when she blushed, yet I figured she had no idea it was that visible. She cleaned up pretty nicely tonight; though even in her worse moment, Amanda was beautiful.

Tonight, her hair was down, flowing in shiny waves down her shoulder. She wore a dress that showed off her creamy cleavage, which seemed to beckon to me. Everything on her was perfect. She was perfect.

"Sorry I'm late, guys," I announced, happy that the only empty chair was next to her.

"No worries. We figured you must still be exhausted," Camille said.

I nodded as I took a seat beside Amanda, suddenly captivated by her sweet, feminine scent.

I didn't look her way because I knew once I did, everyone at the table would probably know what had happened between us. My desire for her would surely be seen, and that was the last thing I wanted to happen.

We ordered our food, and once we did, a conversation ensued.

"So, where did you guys sleep after getting lost?" Cecile Jeffries asked as she picked at her food.

As I was about to respond, Camille cut in. "In a cave by a waterfall. I'm just happy it wasn't out in the open air."

"That must've been uncomfortable for you both," she continued.

I nodded. “Yes, it reminds me to always appreciate my bed,” I said.

They all chuckled.

“I’m just happy you’re both back in one piece,” Paul said.

“Me too. I almost cancelled the wedding,” Camille said.

“I’m happy it didn’t have to come to that,” I said.

There was a small silence. “Amanda, sweetheart, are you okay?” Camille asked. All eyes turned to Amanda, who immediately looked up from her meal and offered a quick smile.

“Yeah, just a little tired,” she said.

“Well, you’re free to head to your room if you wish. We all understand you must still be exhausted, honey,” Paul chipped in.

“Right. Why don’t you go ahead? We’ll see you in the morning.”

She smiled as she stood. “Okay. Goodnight.”

She got up from her chair, and after saying her goodbyes, the table was quiet once again. I watched as she left, hoping I could leave with her, but I knew better. The conversation shifted to business, and after entertaining them for a few minutes, I cleared my throat.

“I think I’m gonna call it a night as well,” I said with a smile.

“Of course, Carter.”

I nodded and got up, telling my goodbyes to the others before I began walking to my cabin. I knew which one Amanda was in as I’d often seen her coming from it in the mornings. As I moved closer and closer towards it, thoughts began to fly around frantically in my head. One part of me wanted to head in her direction and the other part knew I should head to my room.

What was the point of complicating things more when we both knew it couldn’t get further than this island? In less than three days, we’d both be back home, worlds apart.

Yet, knowing all this, I paused on the boardwalk right in front of Amanda’s bungalow. I clenched my teeth and raked my fingers through my hair at an impasse.

I took one step before I paused again, looking right at her door.

“Fuck!” I hissed before purposely strolling to her front door. I knocked, and as I waited for her to answer, I looked around me, watching to see if anyone was close by and contemplating going back to my room, which wasn’t far from here.

When the door opened, Amanda stood on the other side, her

eyes widening when she saw me. She was out of her dress—now in a robe that she was done tying once she saw me. Her hair was up in a bun on the top of her head, and her face was bare except for the sheen of lip-gloss against her lips.

My manhood stirred instantly at the sight of her, and I swallowed, unable to take my eyes off her. She said nothing, but the shock quickly faded away, and the desire I'd seen at the waterfall was in full effect.

I stepped inside, standing before her without saying a single thing, but the chemistry was enough communication between us.

Amanda closed the door, and as soon as she did so, I clamped my lips to her like I'd been deprived for eternity. A soft moan escaped her lips, her hands wrapping around my neck as she gave in to my hungry kiss.

Eager to be inside her once again, I reached for the button of my shorts and began undoing them.

We stumbled towards the bed, and once Amanda's body was bucked against it, I broke the kiss and reached for the knot of her robe. With one pull, the rope became loose, parting to reveal hints of Amanda's naked body underneath.

My cock strained painfully against my shorts as I peeled the robe from her shoulders, exposing her naked body underneath. I swallowed the saliva that had pooled in my mouth at the sight of her.

She sat on the bed and scooted backward; her legs slightly spread while doing so. I watched her while every primal instinct rose inside of me. Her rosy, pink nipples were hard, her breasts firm and sitting perfectly on her chest.

My gaze wandered down to her thick thighs, her puffy pussy cheeks peeking through her, already thinly coated in her wetness by the looks of it.

Suddenly, I had a different agenda in mind—one that included tasting her. I reached for her and pulled her ass to the end of the bed before I went to my knees, face to face with her pussy. It was shaven bald, the skin smooth and soft, looking so mouthwatering.

My heart thrummed in my chest as I stared at her small little gem, looking tiny enough to accommodate only a finger.

She gasped once she got the gist of what I was about to do and parted her legs further to grant me more access.

I pressed my thumb against her sweet little nub and caressed it into small circles, loving the moans that erupted from Amanda in the

process. She was soft and wet—wetter the longer I stimulated her clit. I could see her juices seeping out from her tiny little slit and knew she was drenched.

Desperate for a taste, I moved further between her legs and licked her slit open, coating my tongue with the sweetness of her juices. Amanda moaned; her legs slightly trembling while her head crashed back against the pillows.

I stuck my tongue inside her again and circled her tiny hole, knowing my cock had been there once, stretching her virgin flesh to the max. I sucked on her soft folds as I remembered fucking her heavenly tightness. Tasting her came close to having my dick inside her, but nothing compared to the sheer warmth of her tight pussy, trying to milk every ounce of cum out of me.

I lapped at her folds, licking and sucking at every drop she spilled her for. She began to writhe on the bed, her back arching as I suckled on the sweet nectar of her pussy.

I held both her legs as they caved in on me and sucked her harder and deeper, enjoying her grunts, the soft cry of my name on her lips.

I couldn't get enough of her or her juices—how much more she spilled once I increased my pace.

Amanda's fingers raked through my hair, her hips thrusting against my mouth while her cries increased. My grip tightened on her legs while I sucked and licked her soft flesh, knowing she was just seconds away from coming.

She gripped the bedsheets with one hand, the other still resting on my head, while her cries filled the room. I reached up with one hand to latch onto her breast, giving each a firm squeeze.

Amanda gasped, her head thrashing from side to side. I was as hard as rocks as I watched and tasted her in her fullness, knowing I hadn't had such privilege in the dimly lit cave.

Her body bucked, and her legs buckled around my head as she came, her cries loud, her eyes clamped shut. I stuck my tongue inside her and felt the warm release against my mouth as she came. I was there to collect everything she offered until her tremors eased, as well as her heavy breathing.

Her legs fell open after a while, and that was when I let myself up, my mouth flooded with her juices.

She moaned softly, and I came up over her, hovering over her flushed face.

I lowered my mouth to her lips, willing her to taste herself. She moaned as soon as I shared her essence, her hands tightening around me as she kissed me hungrily. I was happy to see she still had some energy left because I was far from being done with her.

As we kissed, I felt her hand between us, rubbing on my crotch through my clothing as I strained painfully against my shorts.

I slipped from the bed and pulled off my shirt, my shorts going in quick succession. I pulled at my freed erection and admired the way Amanda was staring at it as if she couldn't wait. Truth was, I couldn't either.

I pulled her to the edge of the bed, and she parted her legs, showing how much she glistened with her slick arousal. I pressed the shiny head of my cock against her entrance and slammed into her in a single, hard thrust that had her screaming.

As her tight, warm walls consumed my entire length, I grunted at the tight fit, allowing myself a second before I started to thrust inside her.

I watched as I pistoned back and forth, her fleshy lips feathering back and forth with each sharp thrust. My shaft glistened with her juices, and as if more aroused, I fucked her even harder, enjoying the way my girthy cock stretched her wide.

My gaze went back to Amanda's flushed face, her parted lips as she moaned and cried simultaneously, her tits giggling as her body shifted back and forth.

I ran my hands up her stomach to her breasts, squeezing them in both hands and rolling her nipples between my fingers. Her inner-walls clenched each time I pinched them, making her channel unbelievably tighter.

I bared my teeth as I swelled inside her, trying to ignore the soft tugs of Amanda's inner-walls, so I wouldn't come as early.

"Fuck, you feel so good," I muttered through clenched teeth. "I couldn't stay away," I confessed while not slowing my pace.

"Ahh, I'm glad you came," she said before she bit her lips and closed her eyes tightly.

I slammed into her, looking to the spot between us where our bodies joined. I was creamy with her juices, her cream making a thick rim at the base of my cock. Her little slit squelched with each thrust, her juices flowing around my length as I fucked her hard.

I lowered my body to Amanda's, kissing her soft lips while I pummeled into her. Our bodies moved against each other, my cock

burrowing deeper and deeper into her flesh.

Amanda moaned against my mouth and soon ripped her lips apart as she cried out my name. Her walls clenched me tightly, and I knew she was nearing her peak. I wanted to cum with her, so I fucked her faster, making sure to continuously hit the spot that made her writhe beneath me. A small tremor passed through her, her tightness feeling like a vice grip around my pole.

I grunted, thrusting inside her two more times before I quickly eased up and pulled out of her. I only managed to tug my cock once before I blasted cum against her pink, open slit. My thick cream spilled onto her mound, sluicing down to her slit and down the small gape I drilled into her.

I couldn't help myself. I pressed the head of my cock inside her yet again, watching as the tip pushed cum inside her. She was dribbling wet, my semen trailing all over her midsection, possibly the sexiest thing I'd ever seen in my life.

I bucked inside her, felt her gripping, and I only managed a few more thrusts before I filled her with the remainder of my cum.

While Amanda writhed beneath me, I stayed inside her milky goodness until my erection softened, slipping out with a trail of cum in tow.

Chapter 10

Carter

"I thought I'd never experience this again… ever," Amanda softly said beside me as I held her in my arms.

"To be honest, me, too, but I couldn't resist. I couldn't help myself."

She smiled. "I'm glad you came."

I chuckled. "Me, too. It's nice to share a bed with you this time around."

She giggled. "So nice."

A small silence fell between us. "I should probably go before someone comes knocking."

"No!" She blurted quickly, catching both of us by surprise. She quickly cleared her throat. "I mean, everyone must think we're asleep by now. It's okay to stay longer."

I didn't rebut. Truth was, I wanted to stay. There was no doubt about that.

"Okay," I said, kissing the top of her head. "I'm going to run a bath," she said as she bounded from the bed and skipped to the bathroom area. I smiled as I watched her voluptuous hips swaying from side to side, her hair spilling down her back.

When did I get so lucky, yet so incredibly damned at the same time?

**

Half an hour later, we were both laying in the tub with flutes of champagne and fruit at our disposal. Amanda was cushioned between my legs, her head resting against my chest, her backside unconsciously grazing my cock.

I had my hands wrapped around her, caressing her stomach before they trailed up to her tits. The milky water made everything better. She was like butter against my hands, having no idea what she was doing to me while she spoke.

I had to find a way to distract myself, and in doing so, a question came to me. "How are you still a virgin, Amanda?"

“Well, were. You made sure of that,” she said, turning to smile at me.

I chuckled. “Yes. How were you still a virgin at twenty-three?”

I shrugged. “I guess I wanted to do it with someone who truly meant something to me, or I was really attracted to. And, I haven’t been this attracted to anyone but you.”

“I’m honored,” I said.

She cleared her throat. “We might not get to see each other after this, but I’m glad I did it with you.”

“Me, too,” I said, kissing her on the side of her head. “Do you want to ever get married, have kids?”

There was a short silence. “Yeah, I never thought about it much after I went to college, but in high school, I always wanted the husband and the house full of kids.”

My brow perked up. “A house full?”

She laughed. “Yeah, I always wanted siblings as the only child, and it kinda sucked being in a huge empty house all my life, so I decided I’d have more than one child when I was old enough to start my own family.”

I smiled as I listened to her, but as soon as I thought about it deeper, the smile quickly faded from my face. The thought of Amanda being with someone else other than me made my blood boil. The thought of someone else touching her, filling her with cum and swelling her belly with a child made me angrier than I’d anticipated.

I frowned deeply, and when Amanda didn’t get a response from me, she turned, looking concerned.

“Is everything okay?”

“Fine.”

My hand slid between her legs. I wanted to think about something apart from the happy family I couldn’t give her, and since I was hard, I knew exactly how to distract myself.

Amanda moaned as soon as I touched her nub, circling it until her neck was arching against me. I took the opportunity to suckle on the slender column, enjoying the feeling of having her soft flesh against my lips once again.

“Mmm,” she moaned, her eyes fluttering as she gripped my legs.

She twisted her body and turned to me, looking between us with cheeks rosy.

“I want to taste you,” she said, her voice soft and innocent.

I held her gaze, seeing the rich desire in her soft, blue eyes. I got up from the water, dripping wet, and sat against the edge with my cock stiff between my legs.

She shuffled up towards me, water cascading over every inch of her supple body. I watched her perched there, staring up at me with a look of trepidation on her face before she took my cock into her hand, circling it tightly with her fingers, and then she started massaging the length.

The liquid softness of the water was enough lubricant, and I grew harder just with a couple of soft tugs of her hand. She smiled up at me before her eyes were again strained on my length. She ran her thumb over the tip, gently caressing the tiny slit. She went all the way down and caressed my balls, her hand trailing to the base of my cock before she lowered her head on it.

She swirled her tongue against the head, and I stiffened just a little as pleasure coursed through me. She paused at my reaction, staring up at me with her soulful blue eyes.

“Continue,” I instructed, gliding my hand along her creamy, soft cheeks.

She held my cock, and when her warm mouth covered my tip, I closed my eyes, basking in the amazing feeling. I gripped the edge of the tub with one hand, the other trailing through her hair.

As her mouth went further, the warmth of her mouth consumed my length, spreading with every inch she took. Her lips slid upward before she went down again, her soft lips massaging the shaft then the head.

I grunted when she pulled off and went back to licking, seemingly exploring every avenue of pleasure.

“I like having you inside my mouth,” she said, and my pulse quickened at the innocence in her tone—the way she looked up at me with her doe eyes.

She wanted a husband and kids, and someday, some lucky bastard would be getting this type of treatment.

I clenched my teeth and pulled up from the water, hungrily crashing my lips to hers. Amanda moaned as I kissed her but tried to meet every bit of passion I offered.

I stepped outside of the tub, and she did the same. I reached for her slippery body and pulled her in for a brief kiss before I twisted her around, allowing her to face the vanity in front of us.

Amanda gasped as she stared at our reflection, her lips slightly

agape, body dripping with water.

I pulled at her hips, causing her to perch over while I towered behind her. She parted her legs, and I reached for my cock directing it at her dripping entrance.

I plunged into her with a single thrust, driving myself to the hilt. Amanda cried out, gripping the edge of the vanity and opening her legs further. I didn't waste any time in fucking her, filling her over and over with deep thrusts while our bodies echoed in contact.

My hands tightened on her hips; my mind still fueled with anger at her potential future without me.

She gasped upon each thrust, her tits bouncing in circles while water dripped from our bodies. I didn't let up, even when she called my name repeatedly, her tight pussy cinching around me.

I bared my teeth and watched her being drilled from behind in the mirror. Her face was completely flushed, and each time I slammed into her, her grunts became louder.

"Ohh, I'm about to come!" She exclaimed.

Her pussy clenched around me, and I continued to fuck her until I felt the warm rush of her orgasm flooding me.

The constant gripping of her walls triggered my own, and I muttered a curse, quickly pulling out before I sprayed my cum all over her round ass. I watched as it trickled down her buckling legs, quickly trailing to the floor now that it was mixed with the water on her skin.

I released her and ran a hand through my hair, feeling like I was about to lose my mind.

"I've gotta go," I said before I went back to the bedroom.

"Wha– Did something happen?" Amanda asked as she entered the room with a towel now wrapped around her.

I slipped on my clothes, not caring that my body was still wet.

"Everything is fine," I said before I headed towards the door. Her confused face was the last thing I saw before I closed the door.

I was hit with a whiff of wind and inhaled a deep breath, briefly closing my eyes as I gathered enough courage to leave. I had to clear my head; I had to be alone.

The thought of Amanda being with someone else was the crippling reality I didn't want to accept. I couldn't.

Chapter 11

Amanda

I stared at the door Carter had gone through, still not able to figure out what had caused his hasty retreat.

My eyes burned with tears, the feeling in my chest heavy as I replayed his behavior over and over in my head. Did he think I was easy? Someone he could just have his way with and be on his way?

Tears trickled down my face as I gave the idea more thought. I'd expected the aftercare to be sweet and gentle. Heck—I'd expected him to stay the night, but instead, I was left with tears and his cum still trickling down my legs.

I sniffed as I went to the bathroom to clean up, wincing when I touched my sore vagina. I guess in the moment, I hadn't realized how rough Carter had been, though I'd loved every minute of it.

I went to bed confused, still trying to figure out what had gone wrong.

**

The following day, I didn't see much of Carter and wondered if that was intentional. Though, I was fairly busy, too. Mom had me all over the resort, finalizing everything for her wedding, whic didn't leave me with much time either.

After we were done with wedding planning, we both agreed to a massage. It was exactly what I wanted, and after the waterfall, I hadn't realized how achy my body was.

"Mmm, this feels so good," Mom said.

"So, so good. I wish I'd done this earlier," I said.

She chuckled. "You should have."

I smiled. "Are you nervous about tomorrow?" I asked her.

She scoffed. "Honey, Paul and I have been married for twenty-four years. He still gives me butterflies to this day, but I'm more excited than anything."

"He still gives you butterflies?" I asked, curious.

"Every single time I see him. I'm one of the lucky ones."

I immediately thought of Carter. He was the only man to ever give me butterflies, and I had felt them since the first day we met.

"When you find your person, all of this will make sense, sweetheart, trust me."

I swallowed. "But have you never felt this way about anyone before Dad?" I asked.

"Never. I mean I've dated before, but it was always for the sake of it and exploring. Once Paul came along, we clicked so fast, I knew I really liked him instantly."

"We're all done," the masseuse said, and I eased up from the bed, looking over to my mom, who sat up as well.

"But what if things were complicated? What if no matter how much you wanted to be together, you couldn't?"

She frowned. "That never happened, but I imagine if it did, we'd find a way to make it happen," she shrugged.

"Easier said than done, isn't it?" I mumbled.

"What's this about, honey?"

My heart raced, but I quickly held my cool. "Nothing. I'm just trying to figure out how this love thing works. I'd want to know what to do if I ever find my soulmate."

She smiled. "I can't wait for that to happen. When it does, you'll know it."

The thing is, I already did.

**

I decided to order room service that night and stay in. I still hadn't seen Carter much, but I wished he'd come knocking on my door like he'd done the previous night.

Though my gut feeling told me none of that would be happening. Carter's position in the situation was quite evident. He knew what this was, the trouble it would cause, and he wanted no part of it except fucking me whenever it was convenient for him.

Slightly pissed, I went out on the small patio and pulled in a breath of fresh air.

When I was certain Carter wouldn't come knocking, I went to bed, soaking the pillows with my tears.

I wished things weren't complicated.

**

I woke up early the following day since it was the day of the wedding. I decided to take a walk on the beach before getting anything done, knowing I only had a day before I'd never see Carter again.

The thought was depressing, but I knew it was inevitable, so I tried my best to come to terms with the idea. Fortunately, the cool morning breeze and the soft glow of sun provided the right balance to help me clear my head. I suppose I should be grateful for the experience that brought me the happiest few days of my life.

I jogged back to my room, ready to take a shower, when a knock came at my door. Figuring it was my mom, I went to answer but was surprised to find Carter standing there instead.

My breath hitched in my throat; my pulse quickened as I stared back at him.

As much as I wanted to melt in a puddle at his feet, I straightened up, my hand firmly gripping the knob of the door.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

He seemed taken aback by my response and tone. "I wanted to see you."

I shrugged. "Why?"

His thick brows narrowed. "Did I do something wrong?" He asked.

I scoffed. "You really have some nerve."

"Amanda–"

"I won't be available for when you want a quick release. I value myself more than that," I spat.

"Who said…" he trailed off and paused, realizing apparently dawning on him. "If this is about the other night, I'm sorry."

I shook my head. "It's fine. We've already seen this for what it is—or was. Unfortunately, this is where it ends."

"Amanda–"

I closed the door because I was close to tears, and the last thing I wanted was to break down in front of him. But I was right. I was nothing to Carter than a good time. It was obvious now more than ever and more painful than I'd liked to admit.

He didn't even remember his shitty departure from my room, and now he was back like nothing went wrong.

Did he think I was that naïve?

Fuck him! Silly me for falling in love.

Chapter 12

Carter

After spending the previous day thinking about Amanda, the only thing on my mind as soon as I woke up was seeing her. I didn't think much about how she'd felt when I'd left, which was a mistake on my part. I was stuck, selfishly thinking about my own self and my own ego, not knowing I'd unintentionally hurt her.

I didn't just want her for a quick release, as she said. My reason for coming by wasn't for sex, but after pondering for quite a long time, I was ready to tell her I was willing to forget everything else and give us a try because I didn't want anyone else to have her, and every inch of my body and soul wanted her. She was my person, and I realized that while wrestling with my thoughts.

I didn't want to lose her, and I'd come to make that clear.

Now, with the door separating us and a hurt Amanda on the other end, I didn't know what to do. In my head, I'd painted a vivid picture of how this was supposed to go. Now, all I saw was blurred lines.

But I only had a day to make things right, and time was winding down.

I knocked again, and when the door didn't open, I knocked again. I knocked until she finally did open it, and as soon as she did, I slipped inside.

Amanda gasped; her blue eyes wide. "What are you doing?"

"I left the other night because as soon as you mentioned having a family, I got jealous. I was furious that you couldn't have all that with me," I confessed, watching as her gaze softened.

"I left because I wanted some space to get my thoughts together. I didn't realize I was hurting you in the process, and I'm sorry."

Her eyes glistened with tears. "No one has ever made me feel the way you make me feel, Amanda, and I don't want to lose that. I want to be the person to give you everything your heart desires, and I don't care what I lose in the process."

She sniffed. "Carter…"

"Tell me you want the same thing, and it's a done deal."

She choked a sob. “I do. I really do.”

I chuckled, nodding. “So, we’re going to give this a shot.”

She laughed, blushing. “I guess so. As crazy as it sounds.”

As I was about to reach for her, her phone rang. She looked up at me, and I nodded, giving her the go-ahead to take it. She spoke briefly with her mom, and by the sound of it, I knew it was urgent.

She hung up and looked at me. “Uh, can we continue this conversation tonight? My mom wants my help with something.”

“Of course.”

She smiled and stretched to kiss me briefly on the lips. I left feeling like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

The only problem now was breaking the news to Paul.

**

I was in a good mood for the entire time after seeing Amanda. I wish I’d see her again before the wedding started but knew she might have been busy trying to get things done with her mom. The wedding was around four in the evening, and Paul spoke to the priest while we waited on the ladies to arrive.

For some reason, he seemed nervous, which I found amazing. This was his vow renewal, and by the way he was acting, you’d think it was his first time getting married.

I knew he loved Camille. She and Amanda were all he spoke about when it wasn’t business. For a long time, I’d admired that—how family-oriented he was and always wished I’d be placed in a situation someday where I’d love someone so much. It was incredibly ironic how his daughter was the one I felt that way with.

After speaking to the priest, Paul approached me, a smile on his face as he cracked his knuckles.

“Everything good?” He asked

“Yeah, yeah… I just never expected to feel this nervous—not in a bad way, though. I just thought after almost thirty years, I’d be less a mess,” he laughed at that, and I joined in.

“Feels like the first time?”

He shrugged. “More or less. At least, now I’m not worried she’ll leave me at the altar,” he joked, and we laughed yet again.

Paul cleared his throat and slapped his hand against my shoulder. “Look, man, thank you for everything. You certainly didn’t

have to, but sponsoring this trip was a big one, and I appreciate it."

I nodded curtly. "Don't mention it."

"You're a really great friend," he said before he went to talk to his family.

I sighed heavily as I watched him leave, the weight of his words suddenly like a boulder on my shoulders. Guilt ate at me, solely because I knew the friendship he was so proud of would be tarnished once I let him know how I felt about Amanda.

I didn't know Paul's opinion on these things, but I knew most men wouldn't take kindly to their friend being involved with their daughter. I was fifteen years older than Amanda, and that alone was a good enough reason for his disapproval. I couldn't even blame the guy.

Yet, I knew that if I lost Amanda, I'd possibly lose my mind. And I'd come close to doing so just a day after not seeing or talking to her.

I sighed heavily as I overlooked the ocean ahead of us. Luckily, today provided the perfect weather for a wedding, and everything looked great. In the background was the glistening turquoise ocean, the high mountains sitting behind, which would late reveal the perfect sunset.

The staff did an amazing job on the decorating and choosing the right spot. It was intimate and decorated with a variety of flowers that showed the authenticity of the island.

I continued to admire it until my pulse quickened. I turned my head to look, and my body stiffened when I saw Amanda moving towards us. The breath hitched in my throat, my gaze fastened on her, and my brain could not comprehend her beauty.

She'd curled her hair today, pinning back a few strands so it wouldn't fall in her face. Her eyes look brighter and more beautiful—seemingly emphasized by some sort of makeup. As my gaze traveled downwards, my throat bobbed when I cast my eyes on her long peach dress that brushed the floor. Her shoulders were bare, her breasts covered completely by the dress before being draped at the waist with a rope-like design. It snatched her waist, emphasizing her bountiful hips, which flared beautifully below.

I felt the slight stirring erection—the natural reaction every single time I laid eyes on Amanda. She was breathtakingly beautiful, and in that moment, I was more certain than ever that she was the one.

I finally smiled just as our gazes held, and her cheeks ripened

with a blush, her glossed lips stretching into a smile. For a second, I had to remind myself where I was, and that I wasn't the one she was walking towards.

To distract myself, I glanced at Camille, who came shortly after with a bouquet of flowers in hand, wearing a dress similar to Amanda's but only white. She had a small flower garland around her head, fitting the island's theme. I glanced over at Paul, beaming at her, a soft smile on his face as he admired every inch of his wife. You could see the absolute love there, and once again, I found that inspiring.

Everyone took their places, and the ceremony started quickly after. I didn't want to stare, but I couldn't help but glance at Amanda occasionally, happy when our gazes met every time.

I didn't know why I felt like a teenager all over again, so excited about love and passion that I didn't allow myself to think about anything else. The feeling was freeing, and I knew a feeling like that would make me a happy man for the rest of my life.

As Paul and Camille said their vows, Amanda came to my mind, though she'd not left my mind ever since today. But I couldn't help but envision myself saying similar things to her. How much I wanted her not only in the moment but for a lifetime. If I could tell her that now, I would. That's why I was so eager for tonight.

**

The ceremony was brief, and shortly after, a photographer was there to take the photos. Everyone had huge smiles on their faces as they congregated to have their pictures taken. I stood to the side with a feeling of joy coursing through me.

"Carter come on… you're family, too," Paul chuckled.

I was a bit hesitant but knew I wouldn't have been if things were different. It almost felt like a betrayal hearing him say those words and knowing what I'd done. Nevertheless, I moved towards the small group and mustered my best smile.

They took pictures individually and together. I was itching to be beside Amanda, so when Camille said we should take one together, I was quick to rush by her side.

My pulse raced as soon as I stood beside Amanda, captivated by her sweet feminine scent, which did more to me than I could ever imagine. She offered a shy smile as she moved closer to me, but I could see the desire in her eyes each time she glanced at me.

My hand circled her waist, and my erection grew as I touched her. She cleared her throat, and I could feel her trying to maintain her composure as she stared straight ahead.

You're in public, Carter, I had to remind myself as I stood there. I smiled at the photographer, hating it was so brief. Amanda slipped from my arms, and my teeth clenched in disapproval.

I glanced at the time. As much as I hated to admit it, I wanted this to be over with.

Chapter 13

Amanda

I couldn't find the words to describe a more perfect day. It was so perfect I didn't want it to end—yet I did because I wanted to see Carter.

Each time I glanced at him, it felt like a party in my stomach. I loved him, and I felt so happy.

We chatted, laughed, and danced, and I couldn't help but think about Carter every step of the way.

He was dancing with Grandma Ester, and she was smiling from ear to ear, seemingly soaking up his evident charm.

I sipped on my champagne, watching how happy she was—how happy he made her. Carter would definitely fit into the family if it weren't for him being Dad's friend.

Everyone would love him as they did now. I just didn't know how they'd take to the idea, considering he was a family friend. That was the only thing that stood in the way. A truth that would be hard to tell.

My thoughts came to a halt when Grandma Cecile slid on a chair beside me. She offered a polite smile, her gaze traveling in the direction of mine. I quickly looked away and cleared my throat.

"You know it can never be?" She said, and my heart hammered, my head whipping towards her.

"What?"

She looked at me almost pitifully. "Your parents may be blind to it, but it's quite obvious even to a stranger."

I didn't want to believe she was talking about what I was thinking. It couldn't be. Perhaps it was something else.

"What?"

"I know something happened at that 'cave,'" she said, raising a brow at me and placing her glass on the table. "It was written over both your faces once you came back—and the way you look at each other," she scoffed.

My head started to spin. "Grandma–"

"He would've probably made a good match for you despite the

age difference and that he's your dad's friend. He's a provider, and his family name is quite popular around the country, but there's a '*but,*' and you know it."

My eyes pricked with tears. "I– I love him," I croaked.

She scoffed, pulling in a deep breath. "Trust me, you're not in love, Darling. It's only been five days. An island like this will have you thinking you are, but a harsh reality awaits."

My throat burned. I couldn't say anything; I couldn't blink because I knew the tears would fall, and I didn't want that to happen right now.

"You can't go back to San Francisco with such stupid hope. Because you're my grandchild, I won't mention this to anyone else," she offered a smile, but I knew it wasn't to comfort me. "You wouldn't want to disappoint your father again, would you?"

With that, she reached across and patted my hand before she got up and went to join the others, laughing jubilantly as if she hadn't just turned my entire world upside down.

Her last question hung in the air like a thick raincloud, ripping through me like a knife. I got up and quickly left the venue, wanting the fresh air to catch my breath and the privacy to cry my eyes out.

As harsh as she was, she was right, and she'd just confirmed what I'd felt for years. Dad was disappointed I didn't choose the path he wanted, and I would surely disappoint him again by telling him I had feelings for his best friend. I couldn't do it.

I cried until my eyes were swollen. I couldn't return to the reception, so I headed to my room instead, took a shower, and curled up on the bed while I mulled over what Grandma Cecile had said.

At the end of the day, family came first, right?

**

A knock came at my door two hours later. I'd been expecting it, and I knew it was Carter. I peeled myself from the bed, my steps heavy as I moved towards the door.

He was smiling when I pulled it open, looking as handsome as ever. As his gaze roamed my face, the smile fell, replaced by deep concern.

"Are you okay?" He asked, stepping inside and cupping my cheeks.

My lips quivered as I pulled from his touch and took a step

back. Carter looked even more confused.

"You left the reception a bit early. Are you feeling okay?" He asked as he moved towards me again.

I moved away once again, afraid that one single touch from him would have me submitting to him.

"I can't do this," I said, and he froze. "I thought I could, but I can't."

His jaw tightened. "Why not? We were on the same page when we spoke this morning."

I didn't know much of what to even say when he had rebuttals like that.

"I changed my mind," I said.

Carter didn't look convinced. He looked even more confused.

I lifted my chin. "Aside from the fact you're my dad's friend, we can't be together simply because when I stood there today, looking at how in love my parents were, I realized what I thought I felt for you was nothing compared." My heart broke into a thousand pieces as I said the words, turning to dust once I saw the look on Carter's face.

"I think it was just the sex," I added, adding gasoline to the flame.

The hurt was evident on Carter's face, the single vein popping in his forehead, his red ears. It all broke me.

He nodded slowly, processing my words. "Enough said," he said before he turned. My knees weakened when he pulled the knob open and left through the door.

I gasped, breaking into a loud sob and falling to the floor on my knees. I didn't know when I stopped crying, but it wasn't anytime soon.

**

Our flight was early the following morning. At ten. We were gathered in the hotel lobby by eight, ready to leave for the airport. I had shades on this morning, afraid that someone would ask me why my eyes were still puffy.

Everyone was there except for Carter, and I wondered if he was late to say his goodbyes or didn't plan on showing at all. Not that I could blame him if he didn't. This was all my doing.

When the cars pulled up to take us to the airport, I glanced

behind me.

"Where's Carter?"

"Oh, he said he had a business call he needed to take; plus, his flight is later on today," my dad provided.

"Oh," I said, feeling sad and disappointed all at once.

My gaze shifted to Grandma Cecile, her brow raising a tad as she looked at me.

We loaded inside the cars, and I felt better about not traveling with her. I already had to endure a trip to San Francisco with her. I didn't want to do both.

As soon as we got to the jet, I made sleep my excuse. Only I thought about Carter for half of the journey and slept the other half. I avoided any type of conversation, especially with my grandparents present, and just wanted to head home in peace, regretting what I'd done for the rest of my life.

Chapter 14

Carter

I dropped my luggage to the floor as soon as I entered through my house door and sighed heavily. The silence that welcomed me reminded me that a getaway on the island had been the best thing for me. I'd needed the break—apparently, I still did because I was still not ready to be home.

Either that or after meeting Amanda, I'd suddenly wanted more out of life. I'd always envisioned myself with a family but always thought if it were supposed to happen, it would. It wasn't a strong desire or something I'd openly sought out over the years.

Yet, with Amanda, I'd felt differently. I could imagine such a life with no one else but her.

Pity it had to end the way it did. I thought we were on the same page; turned out I was wrong.

I sighed heavily and went to the kitchen to get myself a beer. I took a hearty gulp, my gaze traveling around the empty space. I was about to head upstairs when my phone rang. I dug into my pockets and checked my phone, realizing it was Paul.

I pulled in a breath. "Hey."

"Hey, are you back in DC. I figured you must be by now."

"Perfect timing. I just got in about five minutes ago," I said.

"Good. Thanks again for everything."

"It's all good," I said, rubbing the nape of my neck. "How's everyone?" I asked, knowing I could be more specific than that. But Amanda was the only person on my mind.

"Everyone's great. I think the parents are a bit tired, but they're home and well. Amanda has been in a bit of a mood, but I figure it's because she's back without a job."

I cleared my throat. "Is she okay?"

"Yeah, she's fine otherwise."

I nodded to myself. "Hey, do you ever sometimes regret she isn't a doctor like the rest of your family?"

There was a short silence. "Uh, she pretty much told us she didn't want to be a doctor sometime in high school. I guess at the

time, I'd wanted her to be just like me, but later, I realized it didn't matter, as long as she was happy."

"So, you're fine with her Major?" I prodded.

"Definitely. Some—namely my mother—thinks otherwise, but it's fine. I would be fine if Amanda didn't work a day in her life, too."

I nodded. "I think you need to tell her that."

"D–did she mention something to you?" Paul asked.

"Uh, something along those lines. I just don't think she wants to disappoint either of you."

Paul scoffed. "She hasn't. Nothing my baby-girl does will be disappointing to me. I'm just happy she's in my life and vice versa."

"That's good."

There was a small silence again. "Do you think she's happy? I mean, I only ask because I know you might've had a heart-to-heart being lost on that island. She doesn't have any friends, so I'm wondering if she might have said anything that might–"

"She was happy on the island, but as I said earlier, you might want to talk to her—let her know you're fine with whatever she chooses to do with her life."

Paul cleared his throat. "Of course, of course. I'll talk to her soon — and Carter, thanks again. You're truly a great friend."

My lips parted to rebut, but what was the point now? There was no point in confessing when there was no future between Amanda and me. All that we were was trapped on that island.

"You're a great friend, too, Paul."

He chuckled. "Well, we'll talk soon. I hope we can meet up again sometime soon."

"I hope. Catch you later."

The call ended, and I sighed, ruffling my hair to rid myself of my mounting frustrations. I needed to stop thinking about Amanda, especially since she had made it abundantly clear she didn't want me.

The idea of moving on was always pretty simple, but this time, it was painfully harder to do.

Chapter 15

Amanda

A whole week had passed, and each day, I regretted my decision more and more. All I could think about was how happy I was in Tahiti with Carter, how he had made me feel, and how his presence had revealed a beautiful future for me.

Each day of not seeing or talking to him was like torture. My heart was in agony, and so was my body, not being able to feel his touch, feel him so deep inside me.

The pain was so much I finally decided I couldn't handle it anymore. I had to let him know that what I'd said to him—no matter how hurtful—was a plain lie. I had to let him know it was either him or no one at all.

That is if he still had any feelings left for me. He probably hated me by now after the awful things I'd said, but I still had to tell him how I felt.

I was still aware I'd potentially disappoint my parents in the process—Dad especially—but I was unhappy, and even before family, I had to put myself first—at least now that my happiness hung on the line.

My phone shrilled beside me, and I placed my paintbrush down, glancing at the caller ID.

It was Dad.

"Hey, sweetheart."

"Hi, Dad."

"I've been busy this past week, but I wanted to talk to you about something important. I was wondering if you could come by the house tomorrow?"

"Uh, is everything okay?"

"Yeah, yeah, I just want to talk to you."

I bit my lips. "Actually, I wanted to talk to you, too, so it's perfect."

He chuckled. "Well, then, look at that. See you then?"

"See you then."

The call ended, and I stared at the painting I'd been working on

for the past couple of days. It wasn't done yet, but I was pleased with how it looked so far. It was inspired by the Tahitian waterfall where Carter and I had been stuck for the night. Where I lost my virginity and where I fell in love. If I didn't have Carter, at least I'd have the vivid reminder of what we once were.

I pulled in a breath, playing scenarios in my head about how I'd tell my parents I was going to DC to find the man I love. It sounded crazy in my head, but I was crazy in love.

**

On Sunday morning, I drove to my parents' house with the weight of my impending confession heavy on my shoulders. I knew my mom would take it easier than my dad, though Carter was his friend at the end of the day.

I parked in front of the family mansion and allowed myself a minute in the car to compose myself. Once I stepped out, I knew this was it.

"Guys, I'm here," I called once I stepped inside the entryway.

"In here, sweetheart!" Mom called.

My heart fluttered hearing her voice, knowing this was about to become real in just a minute.

I entered the living room to find them seated there. They were watching the game but turned it off as soon as I entered.

"Hi honey," Mom exclaimed, getting up to hug me. I hugged her, smiling before I took a seat in front of them.

"So, what's this about?"

"Straight to it, I see," she chuckled. "Do you want anything to eat or drink?"

"I'm good, Mom," I reassured, rubbing my hands together.

Dad cleared his throat. "How's the job hunting going?"

I stiffened, my gaze shifting to him. "It's the same. To be honest, I'm not motivated at the moment."

His forehead creased. "Is everything okay?"

I swallowed. "What was it you wanted to talk to me about?"

He straightened in his chair. "Well, we're kind of on the same page. I just wanted you to know we're proud of you and will always be despite the path you choose."

My throat constricted. "Dad, where is this coming from."

“Carter said something to me, and I thought I’d clear the air.”

My pulse quickened at the mention of Carter’s name. “He did? What did he say?”

“Doesn’t matter, but if I haven’t been transparent enough in the past, I’m sorry. I don’t care if you didn’t choose medicine. You didn’t disappoint me by not choosing what everyone else chose. In fact, I’m proud of you for sticking by what you want even when it seemed difficult. You chose to be different and have a mind of your own and that’s not disappointing at all. I want you to know that.”

As my eyes filled with tears, I glanced at Mom, who had an approving smile on her face, her lips trembling in the process.

“Are you sure?” I croaked.

“Sweetheart, I’m positive,” he said as he stood with outstretched hands, moving towards me.

We hugged, and I cried. This felt like something I’d struggled with since high school, and to have him say it out loud in such a manner meant everything to me.

What I’d planned on telling him seemed like a slap in his face now after this.

He broke the hug and smiled at me, cupping my face in his hands. “What did you want to talk to us about, sweetheart?”

“Er…” I went back to take a seat, watching as Dad did the same.

Doubt rattled my mind as I considered putting this off for a later day, but I realized each day that went by was each day that Carter slipped further away from me.

“I’m going to DC,” I said.

A confused frown appeared on their faces at the same time.

“Why, what’s there?” Mom asked.

“Carter,” I said, my heart pounding even faster. “I’m in love with him.”

Mom’s gasp sounded inside the room, and Dad’s gaze searched the room, confused.

“What?”

I was already on the verge of tears. “I didn’t mean for it to happen, but it did.”

Mom had her hand over her mouth as she stared at me. It was more so shock than any other emotion though.

“Sweetheart, are you sure?” She asked, taking me by surprise.

The tears fell from my eyes. “I am. And I miss him so much,” I sobbed.

“Does Carter feel the same?” She questioned.

My lips quivered. “I don’t know if he still does. I said some pretty awful things to him before I left.”

“Oh sweetheart,” my mom consoled, glancing at Dad, who still said nothing.

“Dad, I know this is hard for you, and trust me, I tried to stay away for that exact reason, but not being able to be with him is tearing me apart, and I can’t take it anymore,” I exclaimed.

After a while, he nodded, clearing his throat. “Carter is a good man; he’ll take care of you. I don’t doubt that.”

“B– but how do you feel?”

He rubbed his temples. “Obviously, this is a hard pill to swallow, and I wish either one of you had told me before now, but you’re both adults, Amanda. When I became a father, I made an oath that I’d always put your happiness first, and I’ll always do that, no matter what. I just need you to be sure this isn’t just lust, mistaken for love. I mean, it was only a week.”

I swallowed the lump in my throat. “Mom said when you found your person, you’d know right away. I knew the first time I saw Carter, and after we got lost, I became more certain.”

“That’s why you were asking me all those questions when you got back?” Mom asked, smiling.

I nodded. “You said if things were ever complicated between you and dad when you met, you’d find a way to make it happen because he was your soulmate.”

They shared a look and smiled.

“I did,” she said.

“This is me finding a way to make me and Carter happen. I don’t want to lose him, so I’m going to DC to get him back.”

Mom clasped her hands over her face, tears streaming from her eyes.

“Do you know his address?” Dad asked.

Shocked at his response, I quickly shook my head. “I didn’t even think of that, but no.”

“I’ll send it to you, and I’ll arrange a jet to take you there tomorrow if you wish.”

The image of their faces became blurry as tears streamed from their eyes. I sobbed as I lurched towards him, throwing myself in his arms. He chuckled, holding me tightly.

"You're not mad?" I asked, breaking free to observe the expression in his eyes.

He smiled. "I don't know what I'd do if I found your mother and let her slip through my fingers. If it makes you happy, sweetheart, I'm all for it."

"Thank you so much, Dad."

He kissed me firmly on the forehead, and I hugged him yet again, moving towards Mom, who was a laughing, crying mess like myself.

"So, I might get some grand babies sooner than I thought?"

"Mom!"

She laughed.

"Darling please, bear in mind Carter is my friend and Amanda is my baby-girl. I don't want that image in mind just yet." He chuckled, and I joined in.

I couldn't believe this was happening. If I'd known the outcome would be like this, I'd never have said all the things I said to begin with. I'd avoided a horrific week and would be with Carter instead.

Now, I wanted to see Carter more than ever.

Chapter 16

Amanda

As promised, my dad gave me Carter's address and arranged the private jet to fly me to DC. He even went as far as finding out his schedule at the hospital for me, so I had a greater chance at finding him at his home.

I had a smile on my face the entire time, though I had no idea what the outcome would be once we saw each other.

I was just happy I'd ticked off one box without much hassle.

Once I arrived in DC, my heart was in my throat as my anxiety worsened. My palms were sweaty, my limbs were already weak, and I hadn't even seen Carter yet.

I took an Uber to his address, and by the time I arrived at his place, it was around six in the evening. When I had to stop at his gate to be buzzed in, I felt a tinge of disappointment, having wanted to surprise Carter in a sense.

Now he knew I was here; he'd either put me through or tell security to send me on my way. My heart thrummed in my chest as I waited for confirmation, my palms sweating in my lap.

The young security in the small booth looked at me just as he was about to end the call. Time seemed to move at a slower pace as he politely ended the call on the other end and placed the phone on its receiver.

"You may go ahead, ma'am," he said, and I smiled at him, feeling like a nervous wreck.

The driver sped forward as the tall iron gates opened and came upon a narrow stretch of road. My eyes were fastened outside as I stared at the landscape—mostly tall trees. We traveled across about two acres of land before we came upon the huge mansion ahead. My lips parted as I marveled at the structure that exuded opulence and grandeur. Surrounding it was lush landscaping grounds and a sweeping driveway, lined with manicured hedges.

It was definitely bigger than our San Francisco home—definitely more posh and polished.

I stepped out of the car, my eyes still steadily planted ahead.

"Should I wait, ma'am."

I paused at the question and glanced at the driver. It was a good question. I didn't know how long I'd be here or if Carter had only put me through to send me on my way.

"Uh, I'll call you when I'm ready," I said, smiling at him.

He nodded before he drove away.

I mustered a sigh as he left, knowing this was the moment. I walked to the huge front door, smoothing my hands against my pants. As I raised my hand to ring the doorbell, it opened. My breath caught in my throat when Carter stood on the other side, a solemn look on his face as he looked at me.

"Hi," I said.

"When the security told me you were at my gate, I almost didn't believe it," he said, his gaze roaming my frame.

I shifted a little. "I can hardly believe I'm here."

The corners of his mouth tipped into a small smile. He shifted from the door and stepped to the side. "Please, come in."

I smiled as I sidestepped him, catching a whiff of his familiar scent. I entered his home, too nervous to stare at anything but him.

"Can I get you something to eat, drink?"

"I'm fine. I just want to talk," I said when he turned to me. "I said some pretty awful things I didn't mean at the resort, and I wanted to apologize."

"Why now?"

"I only said those things because I was scared of what my family would feel and think once they found out. I had already considered myself a disappointment to them that I just couldn't add another to the list."

Amanda…"

"I know now. I know that I had things wrong all along with my dad. We had a talk, thanks to you," I smiled.

"He told you that?" He asked.

I nodded. "And I also told him I had feelings for you—that I'm in love with you," my eyes pricked with tears.

He swallowed visibly. "You did?"

"Yes. This week has been the worst week of my life and that's all because I didn't have you in it. Please forgive me for all the things I said, Carter."

"So, it wasn't just sex?" He asked, holding my gaze.

I shook my head. “No. The sex is great, but I want you for more than just that.”

He smiled. “You really came all this way to tell me that?”

“I’d travel across the world if it meant being with you again,” I admitted.

He took a step towards me. “You really want to do this? You’d move here with me?”

I nodded. “I’ve thought about everything. Yes.”

“And your dad’s okay with this?”

“Yeah, he was the one who gave me your address and your schedule for today.”

Carter chuckled. “That’s sneaky bastard. I was wondering what that was about.”

We both laughed. Carter moved closer towards me, cupping my face with his huge hands. “In case it wasn’t obvious, I love you, too.”

I giggled just before lunging forward to kiss him. I closed my eyes as soon as I was reacquainted with his soft, lush lips that had my body flooding with heat and my arousal pummeling inside me at full force. I moaned to be in this position again, deepening the kiss as my body filled with intense desires.

We stumbled to the living room, laughing in between while our hands fumbled with our pants. Carter was the first to get his off, his shirt following. He sat on his sofa and pulled his hardening erection into his hand as he watched me with a ravenous gaze.

I could only go as far as my pants and panties—so desperate to have him inside me I decided it would be fine to leave my shirt on.

“Come here,” Carter said, his hefty erection now fully grown, hard and stiff in his hand, ready to be consumed between my needy, wet walls.

I moved towards him, straddling his legs and lowering my body onto him. My heart raced even more when I felt the warm, smooth head of his cock at my small opening. I sighed deeply, closing my eyes as I lowered myself onto his thick length, impaling myself with the wide girth of his manhood.

My slick pussy slid around him slowly and with some pain, gripping onto him as inch after inch shoved its way into me. I winced and moaned quietly at the stinging burn of being stretched to fit his huge size. But still, I didn’t stop. I shut my eyes, scrunched my face and continued to fill my hole until I consumed all of him inside me.

“So perfect,” Carter said, his voice deep and husky as he gripped my hips and held me in place.

I took the opportunity to pull my shirt off. Carter assisted with my bra, unclipping it and allowing my breasts to fall, bouncing forward.

He leaned in to kiss them, licking around my nipples before he pulled them between his lips. My breath hitched, and I began to roll my hips, causing Carter’s cock to caress my quim.

To have him inside me felt like heaven. I rolled my hips uncontrollably, my moments uneven as the pleasure blossomed in the pit of my gut. My body stiffened, a tremor passing through me as I rose to my peak. I gripped onto his shoulders, my walls gripping him tightly as I flooded him with my sudden orgasm.

Carter pulled me into him and kissed me hard while I shivered around his manhood. I arched my neck, allowing him to trail kisses along it, reawakening my desires.

He reached around to grab my ass, tightly holding each cheek in his hands. I slightly raised my hips, my body still sensitive as Carter thrusted up inside me. I gasped, holding onto the back of the sofa while he pummeled inside me.

“I missed you so much,” he said, slowing just a little before he started again.

“I missed you, too,” I panted.

In one swift moment, Carter lifted me in his arms. He slipped out from inside me, placing me on my back on the large sofa.

I gasped as I stared up at him, reaching out to touch him yet again. Carter lowered himself, one leg resting on the sofa, the other on the floor as he positioned himself between my legs.

He kissed me on my lips, and I moaned against his mouth as he pierced me, driving deep, moving slowly, filling me up inch after inch. My hand circled his hips, moving down his firm buttocks as I pressed him deeper.

A small tremor passed through my body as I felt him at the hilt, his tight balls against my ass while I creamed around his cock.

Carter broke the kiss, holding my gaze with his while he rocked himself back and forth inside me. I gasped as I stared at him, my heart swelling in my chest as my body filled with happiness and pleasure.

“You’re mine,” he said while filling me with deep thrusts.

“Yes!” I gasped, lacing my hands around his neck, my palm running along his cheek. I raised my hips to meet his thrusts, my body

shifting on the sofa as he moved inside me.

“I love you,” he said yet again, his gaze unwavering. My walls clenched around his moving cock.

“We’re going to make this work, right?” I asked him while my hand trailed along his muscular back.

“It has to.” he said before he bucked inside me, his thrusts uneven as he flooded my insides with his cum.

He was pulsating inside me so hard it triggered my own orgasm, and we both came together. Carter leaned in to kiss me hard, not breaking the kiss until every drop of his seed was spilled inside me.

I was breathing breathlessly as I stared into his high ceilings. Life could only get better from here.

Epilogue

Carter

I stopped at my favorite flower shop in town and picked up Amanda's favorite flower, which I learned was tulips.

Afterward, the driver brought me to the building in the heart of the town, painted in turquoise with a sign written in cursive: Serendipity.

I smiled, adjusted my jacket, and then I pushed the door and entered. My eyes scanned the huge space, my gaze drifting over the art on the walls.

I spotted Amanda towards the back, adorned in a floor-length red dress, as she spoke to her mother. Seeing her, my smile immediately blossomed, widening when I moved closer. Amanda had turned a bit, giving me a perfect view of her small bump, which she had one hand resting on.

Her dark hair flowed down her back, even longer and voluminous now that she was pregnant.

My pulse quickened the closer I went, her scent catching my senses.

Just as I was about to reach for her, she put a smile on her face as soon as she saw me. I couldn't get tired of seeing it and was happy I was lucky enough to see it for the rest of my life.

"Hey, baby," she said as she moved to kiss me. The kiss was soft and brief, but it was enough to get me in the mood.

It was a promise for later; right now, we had company,

Her gaze fell to the bouquet of flowers in my hand. "Are these for me?" She asked, grinning.

"Of course, they are," I said, handing them to her.

I glanced at Camille, who smiled from ear to ear. "Hello, Carter."

I moved to quickly hug her. "Camille. Where's Paul?"

"He's taking a call around back," she said, looking as poised as ever in a white pantsuit.

She reached for the flowers from Amanda. "I'll put these in some water," she winked before she left us.

I turned to Amanda, pulling her towards me. “You look absolutely beautiful.”

She blushed. “You cleaned up pretty well yourself,” she said, tugging at my jacket.

I smiled. “I’m proud of you.”

“Thank you. I can’t believe this is actually happening. In a few minutes, it’ll be official,” she said.

We looked towards the door, watching the few people that started to trickle in one by one. Amanda blew out a sigh.

“Do you think they’ll like the work?”

“They’ll love it,” I assured, meaning every single word of it. I lifted her hand to plant a kiss on the diamond ring on her finger.

“I can’t wait for it to be over, though. I’m a nervous wreck who’d much rather be curled up with you, eating tempura rolls,” she giggled, and I grinned.

“We’ll do exactly that once you’re done.”

“I love you,” she said.

“I love you,” I said. She smiled and looked towards the door at the people who came in more.

“I’m gonna start greeting some people. I’ll be back.”

“I’ll be right here,” I said, placing a kiss to her lips before she went to mingle with the guests.

I had a contented smile on my face as I watched her, proud of her for getting to this moment. Despite the connections that could have gotten Amanda all this within a year, she’d refused it all, intent on working her way from the bottom up solely based on her talent and hard work. It paid off four years later, and I was the happiest man alive.

I turned to look at the paintings, my eyes catching the original *‘Serendipity,’* which was the waterfall Amanda had painted several years back. It was an oil painting, a complex representation of where we’d been when we’d discovered each other. The talent and passion could both be seen, and each time I laid my eyes on it, I was intrigued all over again, my chest filling with so much pride I could burst into a thousand pieces.

A figure appeared beside me, and from the corner of my eye, I could see it was Paul. He patted me on the shoulder.

“Absolutely breathtaking, isn’t it?”

I nodded. “Easily one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever

seen," I said, turning to Paul.

He nodded in agreement. "Thanks for taking care of my baby-girl, Carter. I know I've said it a million times, but every time I see something like this, I'm grateful all over again."

"Amanda's my whole world," I told him. "I have you to thank for that."

He chuckled, and we both turned towards the space, which was now filled with people. Amanda stood out from the rest in every way, like a beacon of light in the room. Everyone gravitated towards her, eager to meet the new gallery owner and her amazing pieces.

She craned her neck and looked around as if searching for someone. When she spotted me, a smile bloomed on her face. She waved me over, and I chuckled as I went by her side. She gripped onto my hand, continuing her conversation after introducing me to the curious people.

I was the happiest man alive, and I was aware of it ever since I met Amanda.

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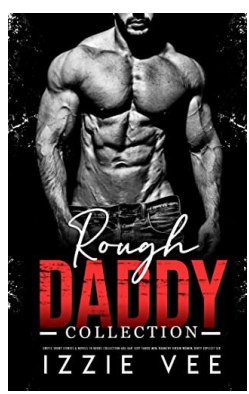

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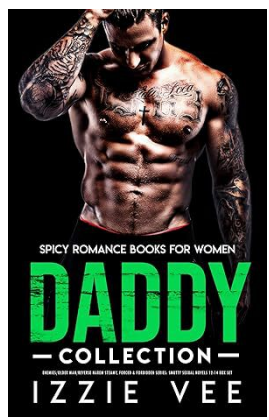

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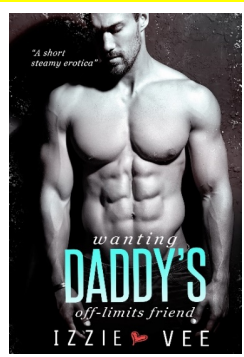

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SAMPLE

I couldn't believe that I was about to head off to college and never had a sexual experience in my life. The person I considered my

boyfriend in my senior years of high school was initially the person I thought I would take the big step with but later found that he only had one intention in mind, and that was to fuck the only girl in our year who was rumored to still be a virgin – me. It had hurt, and I had broken off the relationship with a few heated words thrown at him but later realized there wasn't much I wanted out of the relationship either rather than sex.

I didn't want to be a virgin anymore, so I picked the boy that had given me the most attention and decided that he was the one. Unfortunately, he wasn't and here I was, about to head off to college with my hymen intact.

If it were only based on desire alone, then my dream guy would be the one who came over to my house every now and then with all his charm and kindness. He was the first crush I ever had, but I knew there was nothing I could make of the relationship considering he was my father's best friend.

Connor was everything I wanted in a man; he was sweet, kind, caring, incredibly handsome, and packing for his age. He taught gym at the college that I was accepted into, which made my excitement all the more profound. Dad said that Connor would be there to look out for me as he had always done, and I … ***To continue reading get your FREE DOWNLOAD HERE.***

[A1]Doesn’t make sense